

Chinese Communist Party Historiography of the 1911 Revolution, 1935-1976

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, Bryce William Kositz, declare that this thesis is my own original work;
where the work of others is used, I have acknowledged it accordingly throughout.

Signed: _____

Bryce William Kositz

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Abstract

Mao Zedong's ascension to a position within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)—unparalleled either before or since—was in part due to his ability to control the narration of history. Mao's master narrative retold Chinese history so that it provided the foundation for Mao Zedong Thought and validated his power and policies. This thesis follows the creation, rise to prominence and ongoing revisions of this master narrative by examining its treatment of one, important historical event: the 1911 Revolution. I focus on the period of Mao's leadership of the CCP between 1935 and 1976 in order to understand how his master narrative changed over time. Mao built his narrative of the 1911 Revolution around four themes: the United Front, the periodisation of history, class analysis and the unique nature of China. Each of these themes represents an aspect of Mao Zedong Thought. Changes in the relative prominence of these themes across the course of Mao's life are related to changes in the way he sought to establish his power, the rise of perceived challenges to his revolutionary politics and power, changes in the policies that he was seeking to justify and changes in the nature of Mao Zedong Thought.

Conventions

I use the Pinyin system of romanisation of Chinese throughout this thesis. I make exceptions, as noted, for names and places more commonly known by other transliterations.

I use simplified Chinese characters throughout for ease and uniformity.

All translations from the original Chinese, unless otherwise noted, are my own. I have done my best to transmit the intent, wording and style of the original authors accurately while maintaining coherent and consistent English translations. Any mistakes are my own.

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Introduction

History is ultimately written by the victors. Both sides of a conflict, however, write the history of the conflict as it is in progress. Each side builds a historical narrative portraying itself as the side of the conflict which deserves to and must emerge victorious. The victors' historical narrative survives the war not just because they defeated the opposition, but because their triumph vindicates the claims of their historical narratives.

This thesis follows the creation, rise to prominence and ongoing revisions made to Mao Zedong's 毛泽东 (1893-1976) master narrative of Chinese history. Mao's master narrative of history was the retelling of Chinese history by Mao. It provided the foundation for Mao Zedong Thought and supported his power and policies. I focus on the period of Mao's leadership over the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) between 1935 and 1976 to understand how Mao's master narrative evolved over time during his period of control over the CCP. The thesis examines the narratives of one important event in Mao's master narrative: the 1911 Revolution. I argue that Mao formulated a narrative of the 1911 Revolution which served his political goals: establishing the validity of Mao Zedong Thought and increasing his power over the CCP and China. I further show that within the constraints of serving Mao's political goals, Chinese historians held serious debates over historical methodology. My analysis of these debates reveals how Chinese historians participated in contemporary political debates and interacted with Mao's goals, policies and ideology.

In this thesis, I present a detailed analysis of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution by Chinese historians affiliated with the CCP between 1935 and 1976. By historiography, I mean the body of historical writing of a specific type or on a specific event. The thesis uses the changing narratives woven around this event as a lens to reveal the Party's shifting objectives, the power struggles within its ranks and the challenges faced by historians to preserve the standards of their discipline amidst the pressures of revolutionary politics.

This introduction first presents a literature review of two major topics addressed in the thesis: the development of Mao Zedong Thought and the role historical narratives played in building Mao Zedong's political power. Second, the introduction covers the methods and sources which I use to build my analysis and conclusions. I then review other works which have employed similar methods and provide a timeline of the events of the 1911 Revolution for context. The introduction ends with an outline of the thesis which summarises the content of each of the five chapters: Mao's initial rise to power in Yan'an from 1935 to 1945; the Civil War¹ period from 1945 to 1949; the early People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1949 to mid-1957; the fallout of the Anti-Rightist Movement² from mid-1957 to 1961; and the beginnings and course of the Cultural Revolution³ from 1962 to 1976.

I. Literature Review

My analysis of CCP historiography on the 1911 Revolution comprises two major themes: the development of Mao Zedong Thought and the justification of Mao Zedong's leadership and policies. Before introducing the methodology and summarising the content of the thesis, I review existing literature and focus on the major themes and questions pertinent to this thesis.

I.A. Mao Zedong Thought

The term 'Mao Zedong Thought [*Mao Zedong sixiang* 毛泽东思想]' originated during the 1942

¹ The Chinese Civil War (1946-1950), sometimes called the Second Civil War, began after failed peace talks following the end of World War II when the Nationalist Party and CCP recommenced the Civil War between the two parties which they had put on hold since the Xi'an Incident. The CCP defeated the Nationalist Party, despite the Nationalists' initial numeric and financial superiority, and took control of the Chinese mainland.

² The Anti-Rightist Movement (*Fan you yundong* 反右运动) was a 1957 movement targeting primarily intellectuals for their expressions of dissent against the CCP during the 1956 Hundred Flowers Movement.

³ The Cultural Revolution, or Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*Wuchan jieji wenhua da geming* 无产阶级文化大革命), was the name of the movement which took place between 1966 and 1976. Primarily a struggle over succession, Mao reached out to students to reform the CCP and remove his rivals from the chain of succession, but the movement grew out of hand. Violence engulfed China, almost leading to military control. The movement officially ended after the death of Mao Zedong.

Rectification Movement⁴ as CCP writers supporting Mao sought a term to describe Mao's writings, and the Party coalesced around the term 'Mao Zedong Thought' in July 1943. This "brought to an end a lengthy process of fermentation within the Chinese Communist Party" to sinify Marxism and establish Mao's ideological leadership.⁵ Mao Zedong constantly added to the canon of Mao Zedong Thought over the course of his life: moreover, Mao did not completely control which of his works became the canonical texts of Mao Zedong Thought.⁶ After Mao's death, the CCP rewrote the origins and content of Mao Zedong Thought to portray it as a creation of the entire CCP, rather than just by Mao himself.⁷

Furthermore, how academics studying Mao define the meaning and content of Mao Zedong Thought varies depending on which aspect of Mao Zedong Thought they study. Scholars who have studied Mao Zedong Thought from an intellectual perspective have compared Mao's treatment of class with classical Marxist approaches. Maurice Meisner defines Maoism as the prioritisation of volunteerism and backwards classes over the classical Marxist concept of stages of development,⁸ while Stuart Schram argues that Mao's belief in the power of ideas to develop society rather than the forces of class development shaped Mao Zedong Thought.⁹ Historians studying the political implications of Mao Zedong Thought defined it according to the role of Mao Zedong Thought in the organisation of the CCP. Raymond Wylie argues that Mao believed organisational unity grew from ideology rather than class¹⁰ and Michael Lynch

⁴ The Rectification Movement (*Zhengfeng yundong* 整风运动) from 1942-1944 was a study movement beginning in Yan'an and spreading throughout the CCP to read and discuss important documents to arrive at a mutually similar understanding of Chinese communism. Mao's writings featured prominently among the documents discussed.

⁵ Raymond F. Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism: Mao Tse-tung, Ch'en Po-ta, and the Search for Chinese Theory 1935-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University press, 1980), 171-177, 205-213.

⁶ Martin Helmut, *Cult and Canon: The Origins and Development of State Maoism* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1982), 4.

⁷ Paul Healy and Nick Knight, "Mao Zedong's Thought and Critical Scholarship" in *Critical Perspectives on Mao Zedong's Thought*, eds. Arif Dirlik, Paul Healy and Nick Knight (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997), 4-5.

⁸ Maurice Meisner, *Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 85-87.

⁹ Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5.

¹⁰ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 165.

describes it as a tool built primarily to attain Mao's political goals of eliminating his rivals and unifying the CCP.¹¹ Other studies have approached Mao Zedong Thought from philosophical,¹² economic¹³ and bureaucratic¹⁴ perspectives, all reaching different conclusions on the definition of its meaning and content.

This thesis and literature review cannot summarise the entire content and history of Mao Zedong Thought. Rather than attempt to do so, this literature review identifies four of its themes which will be followed throughout the thesis: the United Front, contradictions in the periodisation of historical eras, class analysis and the perception of the uniqueness of Chinese society. These are four themes in Mao Zedong Thought which historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution may elucidate. By identifying changes to these four themes in historiography, I am able to identify changes to Mao Zedong Thought and thus to Mao's goals and policies.

Among the most common themes in Mao's and the CCP's historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution, particularly before 1949, was that of the United Front. Academics studying Mao Zedong, however, rarely link the United Front and Mao Zedong Thought. Lynch argues that Mao never believed that the United Front with the Nationalist Party¹⁵ would last and instead

¹¹ Michael Lynch, *Mao* (London: Routledge, 2004), 115-118.

¹² See Frederik Wakeman, *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Maurice Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism: Eight Essays* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Nick Knight, "The Form of Mao Zedong's 'Sinification of Marxism'", *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 9 (January 1983): 17-33.

¹³ See Mark Selden, *China in Revolution: The Yen'an Way Revisited* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995); Albert Feuerwerker, "China's Modern Economic History in Communist Chinese Historiography" in *History in Communist China*, ed. Albert Feuerwerker (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1968), 216-246; Charles Hoffman, "The Maoist Economic Model", *Journal of Economic Issues* v. 5, n. 3 (September 1971): 12-27.

¹⁴ See Harry Harding, *Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949-1976* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981); Stuart Schram, "The Party in Chinese Communist Ideology", in *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China*, ed. John Wilson Lewis (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 170-202; Francis Hearn, "Rationality and Bureaucracy: Maoist Contributions to a Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy", *The Sociological Quarterly* v. 19, n. 1 (Winter 1978): 37-54.

¹⁵ The Nationalist Party (pinyin: *Guomindang*, Wade-Giles: *Kuomintang* 国民党) was founded by Sun Yat-sen after the 1911 Revolution from the remains of the Revolutionary Alliance. Sun and the Nationalists attempted to conquer all of China from the warlords after Yuan Shikai's death and allowed the CCP to merge into the Nationalist Party until Sun's inheritor, Chiang Kai-shek, began the First Civil War to destroy the CCP. The CCP and Nationalists allied during the War against Japan, but fought again in the Second Civil War immediately after and the Nationalists were forced to retreat to Taiwan, where

used it as a policy to delegitimise the Nationalist Party.¹⁶ Gerry Groot argues that the United Front was a CCP policy designed to attract intellectuals and small political parties to the cause of the CCP during the Civil War, and continued after 1949 as a policy to control civil society.¹⁷ Kenneth Lieberthal, however, connects the United Front to Mao Zedong Thought through Mao's use of the United Front to amass forces to resolve contradictions in society.¹⁸ Lyman Van Slyke argues that Mao used the United Front as a tactic during both the war against Japan and the Civil War that, "came to occupy a permanent place in Chinese Communist practice and ideology".¹⁹ The United Front held a prominent position in Mao's works prior to 1949, yet disappeared afterwards, which leads historians to question Mao's intentions for the United Front policy²⁰ and whether the United Front constituted a part of Mao Zedong Thought. In this study I will attempt to answer the question of why Mao insisted on the United Front at some times but why it disappeared from his writings at others.

Historians have long linked Mao Zedong's use of contradictions to Mao Zedong Thought. H.F. Schurmann notes that Mao's theory of contradictions dates back to his publication of 'On Contradictions'²¹ in 1937, but that the theory had negligible impact on the CCP and Mao Zedong Thought until Mao's speech 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the

the party remains active today.

¹⁶ Lynch, *Mao*, 106.

¹⁷ Gerry Groot, *Managing Transitions: The Chinese Communist Party, United Front Work, Corporatism and Hegemony* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 59.

¹⁸ Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004, 2nd edition), 73.

¹⁹ Lyman P. Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 58-65, 93.

²⁰ Spence argues that Mao held open the possibility for a United Front with the Nationalist Party after the end of the War against Japan: Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life* (New York: Lipper/Penguin, 2006), 105. Meisner and Lynch, however, argue that Mao used the United Front as a tool to survive the War against Japan and Civil War: Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 90; Lynch, *Mao*, 106.

²¹ Mao Zedong, "Maodun lun 矛盾论 [On Contradiction]" in *Mao Zedong xuan ji, di yi juan* 毛泽东选集, 第一卷 [Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Volume 1] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1969), 274-312.

People'²² in 1957.²³ Richard Levy argues that contradictions were essential to Mao Zedong Thought and that Mao believed that a single, fundamental contradiction defined the historical era and the possibilities for struggle.²⁴ Meisner argues in multiple monographs that Mao's theory of contradictions departed from classical Marxism. Mao lacked faith in the classical Marxist theory that society developed according to contradictions between the forces of production and the relations of production.²⁵ Instead, Mao put his faith in volunteerism, or the belief that only conscious participation could change the world.²⁶ Mao, moreover, foresaw no end to contradictions and thus departed from the Marxist vision of a communist utopia.²⁷ Meisner essentially argues that Mao focused on social and political contradictions, more so than economic contradictions, and relied on conscious actors fighting for control of the superstructure to shape society. Schram argues that Mao believed in willpower to shape society and thus departed from classical Marxism because Mao's definition of contradictions drew heavily from Chinese tradition and China's revolutionary experience.²⁸ While historians have clarified Mao Zedong's beliefs on contradictions, the place of contradictions in canonical Mao Zedong Thought, as understood by the rest of the CCP, remains unclear. In this thesis I study historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to understand how Chinese historians interpreted Mao's theory of contradictions and its place in Mao Zedong Thought. I argue that Chinese historians used Mao's theory of contradictions to periodise history and that contextualising historians' debates over the periodisation of history helps to show how

²² Mao Zedong, "Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti 关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题 [On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People]", *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People's Daily], 19 June 1957, 1-3; also found in *Mao Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1949.10.—1957.12.)* 毛泽东思想万岁 (1949.10.—1956.12.) [Long Live Mao Zedong Thought (October 1949 to December 1957)] (China: N.P., 1967), 147-166.

²³ H.F. Schurmann, "Organisational Principles of the Chinese Communists", in *China Under Mao: Politics Takes Command*, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), 88-89.

²⁴ Richard Levy, "Mao, Marx, Political Economy and the Chinese Revolution: Good Questions, Poor Answers", in *Critical Perspectives on Mao Zedong's Thought*, 160.

²⁵ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 87.

²⁶ Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 42.

²⁷ Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*, 184-185.

²⁸ Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 63.

historians understood and interacted with Mao's theory of contradictions.

Mao used class analysis to divide the population of China into classes based on their propensity to support the CCP and the revolution and differentiate friend from enemy. As Richard Levy notes, one fundamental problem with class analysis in Mao Zedong Thought was that Mao struggled to define class in a satisfactory way.²⁹ Wylie argues that Mao believed that ideology played a greater role than class in the revolution.³⁰ Similarly, Meisner argues that Mao believed "that the bearers of socialism are those who possess 'proletarian consciousness'",³¹ meaning the Communist Party and other champions of his Thought, and not the actual proletariat.³² Mark Selden argues that Mao's volunteerism prompted him to test whether a shared revolution could cause individuals to go beyond their class: a test which Mao considered a success in 1945.³³ The success did not last and, as Roderick MacFarquhar points out, Mao revived class struggle as a core component of his thought and policies in 1962 to fight Soviet revisionism of Marxism.³⁴ Most authors agree that the individual's ideology and support for the CCP played more of a role in the class analysis of Mao Zedong Thought than economic standing. The political climate shifted as Mao re-evaluated the propensity of different groups to support his leadership of the CCP and the revolution. I show in this thesis that Chinese historians altered their narratives of the 1911 Revolution to reflect the political climate and Mao's evaluation of separate groups' support for his leadership.

Academics have remarked on how Mao Zedong viewed Chinese society as unique, a claim borne out in CCP historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution. Meisner argues that the core theme of Mao Zedong Thought was belief that China was the unique vanguard of the socialist

²⁹ Levy, "Mao, Marx, Political Economy and the Chinese Revolution", 165.

³⁰ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 43.

³¹ Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 47.

³² Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 111.

³³ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 157.

³⁴ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 275-281.

revolution against capitalist imperialism.³⁵ China's backwardness made it special, since it allowed China to skip the stage of capitalism and progress straight to socialism. It was Mao's belief in China's uniqueness that caused Mao's deviation from classical Marxism.³⁶ Apter and Saich also consider Mao's theory of the underdevelopment of China a crucial aspect of Mao Zedong Thought.³⁷ That Mao considered Chinese society unique is clear, but the sources of that uniqueness and the specific implications for Mao Zedong Thought remain vague. In this study of how historians, including Mao, wrote on the uniqueness of Chinese society in historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution, I reveal the specific reasons why Mao and the CCP considered China to be unique. The emphasis on the uniqueness of Chinese history also shows how Mao and the CCP applied the lessons of China's historical revolution to China's ongoing contemporary revolution, as well as the global proletarian revolution.

I.B. Mao's Power and Policies

Among the most important motivations for Mao to create and spread Mao Zedong Thought was its role in supporting his leadership and policies. Mao's narrative of the 1911 Revolution helped to spread Mao Zedong Thought and provided ideological justification for his leadership of the CCP and of China. Before analysing this in more detail, I review previous work on how Mao obtained political authority. I cover the existing literature by dividing it into four areas: Mao's master narrative as a quest for personal power, Mao's use of the 'friend versus enemy' dichotomy, the spread of Mao Zedong Thought, and how CCP historians served Mao's goals through their historical narratives.

Many authors have concluded that Mao Zedong's primary goal, throughout his life, was to obtain and maintain power over the CCP and China. Mao and his followers wrote a master

³⁵ Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*, 54.

³⁶ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 86.

³⁷ David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 118.

narrative of history to justify Mao's leadership over the CCP and China. Wylie argues that Mao's followers rewrote CCP history to prove that all Party history had been a struggle between those taking Mao's correct line and those taking the wrong lines.³⁸ William F. Dorrell describes this process of rewriting history as the creation of a myth of Mao's "omniscient, infallible leadership".³⁹ David Apter notes that Mao's narratives of history supported both his leadership over the CCP and the validity of Mao Zedong Thought.⁴⁰ Tony Saich similarly argues that narrating Mao as the central character in the CCP's past made him the central character in the CCP's present and future.⁴¹ Zhang and Tang argue that, in the PRC, nearly all of the debates about history and purges of historians originated from the overt focus of Mao's master narrative of history on the worship of Mao as an individual.⁴² Yan and Gao argue that one of the primary sources of the Cultural Revolution was Mao's fear of losing power.⁴³ This thesis, then, is a story about one of the many methods Mao used to increase and consolidate his power: control of historical narratives.

One of the key methods Mao used to maintain political power was the creation of a 'friend versus enemy' dichotomy, which he wrote into his master narrative of history. Michael Dutton argues that the friend versus enemy dyad is a fundamental component of Maoism,⁴⁴ and Schram argues that early Mao Zedong Thought focused primarily on the elimination of Mao's rivals.⁴⁵ Ji Fengyuan argues that Mao's discourse of class struggle allowed Mao to link his

³⁸ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 239.

³⁹ William F. Dorrell, "The Transfer of Legitimacy in the CCP: Origins of the Maoist Myth", in Lewis, *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China*, 112.

⁴⁰ David E. Apter, "Discourse as Power: Yan'an and the Chinese Revolution", in *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, eds. Tony Saich and Hans van de Ven (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 201-204.

⁴¹ Tony Saich, "Writing or Rewriting History? The Construction of the Maoist Revolution on Party History", in *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, 302.

⁴² Zhang Jingru 张静如 and Tang Manzhen 唐曼珍, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi 中共党史学史 [The Historiography of the Chinese Communist Party]* (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1990), 170-171.

⁴³ Yan Jiaqi and Gao Gao, *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*, trans. and ed. D.W.Y. Kwok (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 3.

⁴⁴ Michael Robert Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics: A History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 6.

⁴⁵ Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 84-5.

perceived opponents to counterrevolutionary classes.⁴⁶ As noted earlier, Wylie argues that Mao's master narrative of CCP history played a crucial role in portraying Mao's line as correct, and his political rivals' lines as incorrect.⁴⁷ Zhang and Tang also argue that Mao's master narrative of CCP history overemphasised the struggle between lines within the Party and engaged in the "absolutification [jueduihua 绝对化]" of Mao's role in Party history.⁴⁸ Mao's use of the friend versus enemy dyad to eliminate his rivals and control society is well documented. This thesis expands on the existing literature regarding Mao's use of the friend versus enemy dichotomy to show that Mao's master narrative of Chinese history played a role in defining Mao's enemies as well as eliminating them. The boundary between friends and enemies changed in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution, just as it did in Chinese politics.

The spread of Mao Zedong Thought throughout the CCP and China supported the rule of Mao Zedong, its creator. This thesis attempts to trace the spread of Mao Zedong Thought as it mirrors the growth of Mao's power over the CCP and China. Many historians have focused specifically on the spread of Mao Zedong Thought during the earliest era of Mao's control over the CCP: the period when Mao and the CCP centre resided in Yan'an from 1935 to 1945. Apter and Saich argue that Mao created a set of stories, linguistic signs and symbols which united the Party in a discourse community dominated by Mao himself.⁴⁹ Many academics argue that the key event in the process of establishing Mao's dominance over the CCP was the 1942 Rectification Movement which taught Mao Zedong Thought and increased Mao's personal power.⁵⁰ Patricia Stranahan examines the role which the *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang ribao* 解放日报) played in the growth of Mao's power in Yan'an,⁵¹ as does David Holm in his work on the

⁴⁶ Ji Fengyuan, *Linguistic Engineering: Language and Politics in Mao's China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 80.

⁴⁷ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 239.

⁴⁸ Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*, 65.

⁴⁹ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 265-269.

⁵⁰ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 157; Peter Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949* (London: Routledge, 2005), 330.

⁵¹ Patricia Stranahan, *Molding the Medium: the Chinese Communist Party and the Liberation Daily* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990).

Yangge 秧歌⁵² which shows how Mao used many cultural forms to build his power. Franz Schurmann notes that after Yan'an, the printed word was not only important for spreading Mao Zedong Thought, but also for maintaining the organisation of the CCP by enforcing an orthodox ideology.⁵³ Meisner writes that the imposition of an orthodox ideology in intellectual, literary and political life was one of Mao's defining tactics.⁵⁴ Xiang Cai argues, however, that an orthodox ideology was not simply enforced, but enthusiastically adopted by many authors as a path to creating "socialist literature" that narrated "the transformation of the former slaves of social production into masters of the state and nation".⁵⁵ I build upon Apter and Saich's argument that Mao created a discourse community and narrative of history to legitimise his leadership of the CCP by following the four components of Mao Zedong Thought—the United Front, contradictions, class analysis and the unique nature of Chinese society—through the history of the PRC. I also link Apter and Saich's argument to the works of other historians to show how Mao continued throughout his life to use Mao Zedong Thought to justify attacks on his enemies.

This thesis specifically follows the spread of Mao Zedong Thought by studying narratives of the 1911 Revolution. Other authors have studied CCP historiography as well and most agree that Chinese historians frequently problematised the use of Mao Zedong Thought in their historical narratives. Timothy Cheek studies the conflicts over the meaning of Mao Zedong Thought through the example of Deng Tuo 邓拓 (1912-1966).⁵⁶ Khan and Feuerwerker argue that

⁵² David Holm, *Art and Ideology in Revolutionary China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁵³ Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 20, 39.

⁵⁴ Maurice Meisner, "Stalinism in the History of the CCP", in *Critical Perspectives on Mao Zedong's Thought*, 192.

⁵⁵ Xiang Cai, *Revolution and its Narratives: China's Socialist Literary and Cultural Imaginaries, 1949-1966*, trans. and eds. Rebecca E. Karl and Xueping Zhong (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), xv-xvii.

⁵⁶ Timothy Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia* (Oxford: Carendon Press, 1998). Deng Tuo was the pen name of Deng Zijian 邓子健. Deng worked in the Jin-Cha-Ji Border Region during the war against Japan and went on to edit *People's Daily* and *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. He committed suicide during the Cultural Revolution after facing persecution for his journalism.

conflicts over nationalist and Marxist history dominated historical debates and became political issues,⁵⁷ as did Arif Dirlik, who argues that the academic debates over the problems of applying Mao Zedong Thought, particularly the debate between historicism and class analysis, became politically charged.⁵⁸ Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik also notes that while historical narratives did function as a means of propaganda during Mao's reign and were thus expected to conform to certain standards, Chinese historians debated methodological issues like applying Mao Zedong Thought to historical narratives with a limited degree of academic freedom.⁵⁹ James P. Harrison provides the clearest account of intellectuals following CCP narratives by showing that the Chinese historians researching ancient Chinese peasant rebellions willingly followed the CCP line on the topic, but also that the consensus broke over time.⁶⁰ In this thesis I cover the interpretation of a single event by CCP-affiliated historians over multiple decades and contextualise the political and ideological reasons for the changes to the interpretation of the event. I link these studies together to present a detailed survey of historiography under Mao. This allows me to examine both the resistance against and adherence to Mao's master narrative by Chinese historians and therefore to Mao Zedong Thought. I argue that historians' debates over historical methodology and the interpretation of Mao's master narrative during Mao's reign parallels and thus increases our understanding of contemporary political struggles within the CCP and China.

II. Historiography and the Context of the 1911 Revolution

This section describes the methods and sources used in this thesis, as well as the context of

⁵⁷ Harold Khan and Albert Feuerwerker, "The Ideology of Scholarship: China's New Historiography", in Feuerwerker, *History in Communist China*, 1-4.

⁵⁸ Arif Dirlik, "The Problem of Class Viewpoint versus Historicism in Chinese Historiography", in *Modern China* v. 3, n. 4 (October 1977): 465-488.

⁵⁹ Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "History and Truth in Chinese Marxist Historiography", in *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, Hedwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag and Jörn Rüsen, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 421-464.

⁶⁰ James P. Harrison, *The Communists and Chinese Peasant Rebellions: A study in the Rewriting of Chinese History* (New York: Atheneum, 1969).

the 1911 Revolution. First, I explain the choice of period covered, justify the use of the 1911 Revolution as a case study and offer a brief introduction to the sources used. Second, I summarise prior studies of the historiography of the CCP and modern China. Finally, I present a summary of the political events of the 1911 Revolution to establish the background context.

II.A. Narratives of the 1911 Revolution, their Contexts and the Sources

This thesis is a study of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution in CCP sources during the period of Mao's control of the Party, that is, between 1935 and 1976. I examine the historical narratives on the 1911 Revolution used by Chinese historians throughout the period of Mao's rule to identify the emergence of new narratives, debates and consensuses. I present these changes in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution against the backdrop of the political and social circumstances of the time of writing. Iggers, Wang and Mukherjee argue that, "historical writings reflect broader climates of opinion in the cultures in which they originated".⁶¹ Dirlik argues that historiography is a subject of intellectual history; historians and their narratives were shaped by the "intellectual and political context" of the times. Dirlik also argues that doing this should not deny the contributions made by the historians themselves.⁶² This thesis treats historiography as intellectual history which considers the political and social movements of the times.

This thesis focuses on Mao Zedong and the Maoist period from 1935 when Mao began to control the CCP to Mao's death in 1976. The Maoist period is a discreet period in the history of the CCP, defined by Mao Zedong's political and ideological control over the CCP and China. The Maoist period was a formative period for the CCP and its control of historical narratives. No master narrative emerged among Marxist historians prior to Mao's rise.⁶³ Mao rewrote the

⁶¹ Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2008), 4-5.

⁶² Arif Dirlik, *Revolution and History: The Origins of Marxist Historiography in China, 1919-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 2-3.

⁶³ Ibid, 16.

history of the early CCP in his master narrative of history⁶⁴ and his narrative has dominated understandings of early CCP history, particularly within Chinese scholarship. Mao and the CCP have used historical narratives as a key component of ideological education within the CCP.⁶⁵ Mao, Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative, moreover, continue to shape post-Mao Chinese historiography.⁶⁶ By understanding the creation, spread and evolution of Mao's master narrative of history during the Maoist period as Mao and his associates created it, we better understand its effect on Chinese historiography.

Mao's master narrative of history is too broad to be studied as a whole, but a case study can represent the master narrative without considering every aspect of the master narrative. According to Apter and Saich, Mao's master narrative consists of three separate narratives: the long narrative about the loss of Chinese patrimony to imperialism beginning in 1840; the middle narrative about Sun Yat-sen's struggle to redeem China; and the short narrative of Mao's efforts to redeem the CCP.⁶⁷ Indeed, the master narrative stretches over the entire course of modern Chinese history. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik states that the master narrative begins with the identification of capitalist sprouts in Chinese feudal society and continues throughout the period of imperialism in China, which Mao called the period of New Democracy.⁶⁸

The history of the 1911 Revolution plays a significant role in Mao's master narrative of Chinese history and serves as an instructive case study for the whole master narrative. Historical

⁶⁴ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 239.

⁶⁵ Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*, 52.

⁶⁶ Gao Rui, "Eclipse and Memory: Public Representation of the War of Resistance in Maoist China and its Official Revision in Post-Mao China" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University 2011), 44, 307-8; Cui Zhihai 催志海, "Xin Zhongguo chengli yilai de Xinhai Geming shi yanjiu 新中国以来的辛亥革命史研究 [Studies on the History of the 1911 Revolution since the Foundation of New China]", *Xueshu zongshu* 学术综述 2015, n.3: 134-152.

⁶⁷ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 90.

⁶⁸ Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 5: Historical Writing since 1945*, eds. Axel Schneider and Daniel Wolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 618-619.

narratives that focus on the 1911 Revolution served Mao's goals of spreading Mao Zedong Thought and supporting Mao's control of the Party and the state. All historical narratives within Mao's master played a role in justifying his thought and his rule over the CCP and China. The 1911 Revolution occupies a unique position in the middle of Mao's master narrative. As noted above, Apter and Saich explain how, after taking control of the CCP in 1935, Mao created a three-part narrative of Chinese history which placed responsibility for the Chinese revolution on Mao's shoulders. The middle and short narratives reflected the narrative prior, not only continuing in chronological order, but also showing that the hero of each narrative inherited the legacies and responsibilities of those prior. Mao, as the hero of the last narrative, put on his own shoulders the legacy of Sun Yat-sen and the responsibility for saving China.⁶⁹ The 1911 Revolution signified the turning point between the degradation of China due to imperialism and the beginning of Chinese attempts to redeem their country. Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution act as a nexus between the long and intermediate narratives identified by Apter and Saich, and link Mao to the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, which makes the 1911 Revolution an ideal case study of Mao's whole master narrative.

Between 1935 and 1949, historiography of the 1911 Revolution played a leading role in the establishment of Mao's master narrative of Chinese history, as well as the CCP's propaganda efforts against the Nationalist Party. After its victory in the Civil War in 1949, the CCP attached less importance to the historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution that Mao had used to rationalise the class coalition that he led to victory. The CCP had less need to invoke the narratives of the 1911 Revolution, and when it did invoke them it adapted them to serve the ever-changing needs of the evolving political environment. Moreover, while in some periods the CCP allowed historians more freedom to advance their own interpretations, in others the Party imposed tight control. Political developments in China after 1949, and the sometimes-conflicting objectives pursued by Mao and other CCP leaders, deeply affected the

⁶⁹ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 92-95

historiography of the 1911 Revolution. This makes the historiography of the 1911 Revolution a representative case study of the whole master narrative.

The thesis uses historical sources published under the purview of the CCP, including major newspapers, such as the *Liberation Daily* published in Yan'an during the War against Japan; the *People's Daily*;⁷⁰ and the *Guangming Daily* (*Guangming ribao* 光明日报) published in the PRC after 1949. Also included are important historical journals, primarily *Historical Research* (*Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究), historical monographs and textbooks and the collected works of individual historians and politicians where original works could not be located. While not all writers of these sources were members of the Party, CCP members were involved in the editing, review and publication of all these sources, thus warranting their inclusion in a study of CCP historiography.

II.B. Studies on the Historiography of Modern China

Many historians have studied modern Chinese historiography or professional history written under the CCP. Historians have even published studies on the CCP's historiography of the 1911 Revolution. My focus on how historiography served Mao's goals, how it expressed Mao Zedong Thought and the lengthy period covered, make my study unique. In the following section, I analyse existing literature on the historiography of modern China according to five categories of analysis: broad surveys of the historical profession, in-depth studies of historiography during brief time spans, biographies of individual historians, studies of the historiography of specific events and other studies of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution.

Some historians have already written about the broad evolution of Mao's master narrative of

⁷⁰ *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报) is the mouthpiece newspaper of the CCP founded in 1948 and directly controlled by the Party's top leadership.

Chinese history and its impact on professional history writing in China. Albert Feuerwerker argues that Mao's analysis of Chinese history dominated historical discourse during his lifetime, and served Mao's goals of both supporting his leadership and spreading Mao Zedong Thought.⁷¹ More recently, Zhang and Tang argue that the CCP has always consciously written history to fit contemporary policies, and that there is a direct relationship between the quality of the policies and the quality of the history produced.⁷² Weigelin-Schwiedrzik traces the basic contours of Mao's master narrative of history, from its creation in the late 1930s, in order to show its political nature,⁷³ but she also argues that "at the same time that historiography was functioning as a means of propaganda... it also functioned as an academic field of inquiry".⁷⁴ These broad surveys agree that Mao's master narrative shaped CCP narratives of history and, therefore, agree that the historical profession served Mao and the CCP. This thesis reconstructs and analyses arguments and dissent within the historical profession to carefully identify the sources and the implications that both support and dissent over Mao's master narrative had for contemporary political debates.

Other researchers have attempted to add to these broad surveys by contributing studies of shorter time spans, and have focused more carefully on the debates of the time. Dirlik suggests that historical arguments held during the early years of the CCP from 1919 to 1937 were, in fact, debates about contemporary revolutionary strategy.⁷⁵ Similarly, Apter and Saich argue that Mao created a new Party history during the 1942 Rectification movement to strengthen his policy position and finally to eliminate his rivals.⁷⁶ According to Q. Edward Wang, between 1949 and 1963, Chinese historians debated whether to apply Soviet narratives

⁷¹ Albert Feuerwerker, *Communist Studies of Modern Chinese History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), xv; Albert Feuerwerker, "China's Modern Economic History in Communist Chinese Historiography", 223; Khan and Feuerwerker, "The Ideology of Scholarship", 1.

⁷² Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*, 3.

⁷³ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 615-636.

⁷⁴ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "History and Truth", 421.

⁷⁵ Dirlik, *Revolution and History*, 48.

⁷⁶ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 269.

to Chinese history; however, when China-Soviet relations deteriorated, so too did attempts to apply Soviet narratives to Chinese history.⁷⁷ Dirlik argues that during the 50s and early 60s, historians attempted to debate historical questions collegially, but they were eventually compromised by politics.⁷⁸ I will link together these disparate studies to find the continuities between eras and tie these studies of short periods to the broad surveys of Mao's master narrative.

One method historians have used to study Mao's master narrative of Chinese history and tie the general studies to the studies of specific time periods, has been to focus on individual historians. Focusing on individual historians allows for the study of extended periods of time without covering the entire historical profession or master narrative of history. In his study of Li Da 李达 (1890-1966),⁷⁹ Nick Knight argues that Chinese Marxists followed the Soviet Union's orthodox interpretation of Marxism in China.⁸⁰ Cheek uses a study of Deng Tuo to observe that the debate between different interpretations of Mao Zedong Thought led to the purges which marked PRC history.⁸¹ James Pusey similarly covers Wu Han 吴晗 (1909-1969),⁸² arguing that he followed the example of traditional scholars, in using the past to criticise contemporary politics.⁸³ While the study of individual historians allows one to link the broad surveys with the studies of short time spans, these studies can miss important debates within the historical profession that the individual did not participate in. A case study on the historiography of a

⁷⁷ Q. Edward Wang, "Between Marxism and Nationalism: Chinese Historiography and the Soviet Influence, 1949-1963", *Journal of Contemporary China* v. 9, n. 23 (2000): 110-111.

⁷⁸ Dirlik, "The Problem of Class Viewpoint versus Historicism in Chinese Historiography", 465-488.

⁷⁹ Li Da was a Marxist philosopher and translator whose works, particularly before 1949 influenced many of the leaders of the CCP. He joined and quit the CCP several times over his life, and was persecuted in the Cultural Revolution. He died in hospice after injuries sustained during struggle meetings, but was posthumously rehabilitated in 1978.

⁸⁰ Nick Knight, *Li Da and Marxist Philosophy in China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 107.

⁸¹ Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China*, 125.

⁸² Wu Han was a prominent historian of particularly the Ming Dynasty and a member of the China Democratic League which joined the CCP's United Front in the Civil War. He became Vice-mayor of Beijing after 1949. His play *Hai Rui ba guan* 海瑞罢官 [*Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*] was interpreted as an attack on Mao Zedong by radical intellectuals close to Mao and their attacks on Wu Han marked the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

⁸³ James R. Pusey, *Wu Han: Attacking the Present through the Past* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 68.

single event can incorporate the works of many historians, and thus provide a greater understanding of the debates and trends throughout the historical profession.

Studies on the CCP's historiography of specific events have made major contributions to the understanding of the Maoist era and Mao's master narrative of history. Joseph Levenson's third volume of *Confucian China and its Modern Fate* specifically covers the historical treatment of Confucianism in the PRC to show the debates over periodisation, and the evaluation of historical figures in the historical profession.⁸⁴ Gao Rui uses the case study of historical narratives of the War of Resistance against Japan⁸⁵ to argue that the CCP could not easily rewrite its master narrative of history; instead, the CCP needed to build upon it as the Party's priorities for the master narrative changed.⁸⁶ Harrison's study of peasant rebellions in CCP historical narratives shows that the CCP used historical narratives to give ideological lessons.⁸⁷ These are the sorts of studies I wish to emulate and build upon. A focus on a single event allows me to include the works of many historians, to provide a better picture of the larger trends in historiography and to examine the creation of, and changes made to, Mao's master narrative.

This is not the first study of the CCP's historiography of the 1911 Revolution. Previous studies, however, did not explicitly tie the narration of history to politics or were simply short studies that suggested a larger survey was necessary. Winston Hsieh's early work on the 1911 Revolution summarises the historiography of the 1911 Revolution written by the CCP, the

⁸⁴ Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, v. 3 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 47-58, 65-66.

⁸⁵ The War of Resistance against Japan (pinyin: *Kang Ri zhanzheng* 抗日战争), or War against Japan, is the Chinese name for the Chinese experience of World War II. Mainland Chinese historians consider the war separate from World War II because it began earlier, starting with the 1931 Japanese invasion of Northeast China and intensifying in 1937 with the full-scale invasion of China. It is also considered separate due to the lack of involvement from other state actors, unlike in Europe or the Pacific. The war ended in 1945 with the surrender of Japan. Due to the CCP's use of this name for the war, I use the term throughout this thesis.

⁸⁶ Gao, "Eclipse and Memory", 37-44.

⁸⁷ Harrison, *The Communists and Chinese Peasant Rebellions*, 261-264.

Nationalist Party and Western scholars. Despite his assertion that all discussion of history in China was tied to politics,⁸⁸ Hsieh's broad survey of many discreet historiographies prevented a focused study on how Mao designed historical narratives to support his policies and leadership. Edmund S. K. Fung similarly writes in a largely bibliographic style to summarise many of the important works on the 1911 Revolution produced in the PRC, and while touching on how politics influenced narratives of the 1911 Revolution, admitted that he lacked the space for an in-depth study.⁸⁹ James Leibold argues that racial animosity towards the Manchu people provided an important impetus for the 1911 Revolution, but that later CCP narratives have intentionally ignored the racial issue to incorporate minorities into the history of the nation. Leibold's article uses only two major sources of information: the materials produced to celebrate the 1911 Revolution's 50th anniversary in 1961, and its 100th anniversary in 2011.⁹⁰ Evaluating whether the 1911 Revolution was a racial revolution is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a wider survey can add depth to Leibold's argument, as well as provide evidence that Mao and the CCP built historical narratives to suit their political goals. Cui Zhihai's study of the CCP's historical narratives on the 1911 Revolution also argues that political concerns affected the historiography of the 1911 Revolution.⁹¹ Cui's focus on post-1980 sources, however, leaves more work to be done on narratives prior to 1980. Chen Jinlong argues that in the early years of the CCP, from 1921 to 1927, the Party used historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to construct a discourse arguing for further revolution, as well as setting the revolution's goals.⁹² This thesis attempts to meet many of the same goals put forward by Chen, but specifically focuses on the Maoist period rather than the pre- or post-Mao periods of

⁸⁸ Winston Hsieh, *Chinese Historiography on the Revolution of 1911: a Critical Survey and Selected Bibliography* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1975), 3.

⁸⁹ Edmund S. K. Fung, "Post-1949 Chinese Historiography on the 1911 Revolution", *Modern China* v. 4, n. 2 (April 1978): 206.

⁹⁰ James Leibold, "Xinhai remembered: from Han racial revolution to great revival of the Chinese nation", *Asian Ethnicity* v. 15, n. 1 (January 2014): 1-20.

⁹¹ Cui Zhihai, "Xin Zhongguo chengli yilai de Xinhai Geming shi yanjiu", 134-152.

⁹² Chen Jinlong 陈金龙, "Xinhai Geming yu Zhongguo Gongchandang zaoqi geming huayu de jiangou 辛亥革命与中国共产党早期革命话语的建构 [The Revolution of 1911 and the Construction of Early CPC Revolutionary Discourse]", *Zhonggongdang shi yanjiu* 中共党史研究 2011, n.10: 47-54.

the CCP. The studies described above are all short works, but their contributions to our understanding of the topic suggest that the historiography of the 1911 Revolution merits thesis-length consideration.

II.C. The Context of the 1911 Revolution

Before introducing my analysis and the contributions which this thesis makes, I will introduce a basic timeline of the political events of the 1911 Revolution to serve as context for the narratives which Chinese historians wrote.

The period of the 1911 Revolution began with the failure of the 1898 Hundred Days Reform of the Guangxu Emperor 光绪 (1871-1908).⁹³ The failure of the Hundred Days turned many intellectuals away from the idea of reforming the monarchy and towards ending the institution, through revolution. Of the revolutionary organisations which proliferated after 1898, the most famous were those led by Sun Yat-sen 孙中山 (1866-1925).⁹⁴ In 1905, many revolutionary organisations came together to form the Revolutionary Alliance⁹⁵ which led armed uprisings and engaged in significant propaganda efforts. The Revolutionary Alliance also engaged in published debates with intellectuals, such as Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873-

⁹³ The Hundred Days Reform (*xuwu bianfa* 戊戌变法) was the 1898 palace movement sponsored by the young emperor and his advisors aimed at reforming China. The short movement ended with the imprisonment of the emperor by the regent and the execution or exile of many of the advisors. The Guangxu Emperor, also known as Zaitian, was the ninth Emperor of the Qing after succeeding his cousin. He was only four upon taking the throne, leaving the affairs of state under a regency dominated by his aunt Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908). The regency interfered in his rule even after coming of age. He led the Hundred Days Reform but the regency and other parts of the family put him under house arrest and reversed many of his policies. He was poisoned and died one day before Cixi's death. For more see Luke S. K Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days: Personalities, Politics, and Ideas of 1898* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); and Rebecca E. Karl and Peter Zarrow, eds., *Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁹⁴ Sun Yat-sen was a physician and then writer and revolutionary who eventually became Provisional President of China after the 1911 Revolution and Premier of the Nationalist Party. He continued to lead a revolutionary movement against the warlords who gained power after 1911. For the sake of clarity, I use the common English transliteration of his name throughout this thesis rather than the less common pinyin. For more on Sun, see Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

⁹⁵ The Revolutionary Alliance (*Zhongguo geming tongmenghui* 中国革命同盟会) was founded in 1905 as an amalgamation of revolutionary organisations dedicated to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty. After the success of the 1911 Revolution, the group reorganised as the Nationalist Party.

1929),⁹⁶ who advocated for reform over revolution.

The propaganda efforts of the Revolutionary Alliance were more successful than armed uprisings at inciting the 1911 Revolution. Revolutionary intellectuals targeted the modernised armies of the monarchy with propaganda to win them over to the side of the revolution. On 10 October 1911, units stationed in Wuchang, unaffiliated with the Revolutionary Alliance yet influenced by its propaganda, staged an uprising after authorities found a list of revolutionaries' names within the army. As many of the units of the Wuchang garrison were deployed elsewhere, the rebellion took over the city. In quick succession, cities and provinces began to announce their secession from the empire. In some provinces armed revolutionaries led the secession movements; while in others provincial governors announced secession. Sun Yat-sen returned to China after the revolution was well underway, helped set up a provisional government in Nanjing and was named Provisional President.

Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916)⁹⁷ took command of the revolution by turning his sway over the military into political capital. Both the revolutionaries and the monarchy sought Yuan's alliance, which enabled Yuan to exploit his position and to barter for greater political power. In February 1912, Yuan forced the young Xuantong Emperor 宣统 (1906-1967)⁹⁸ to abdicate directly to Yuan rather than to the Nanjing Provisional Government, and then demanded to

⁹⁶ Liang Qichao was an influential scholar and journalist who advocated for reform of the monarchy rather than its overthrow. Despite his advocacy for reform before 1911, he did not support any of the imperial restorations which followed. For more on Liang, see Joseph Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1959).

⁹⁷ Yuan Shikai was a general and provincial governor during the Qing dynasty. He became President after the 1911 Revolution, and eventually attempted to proclaim himself Emperor in 1915. He died of ill health soon after giving up his imperial ambitions. For more, see Jerome Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).

⁹⁸ The Xuantong Emperor, also known as Puyi 溥仪, was the last Emperor of China. In 1908 at the age of two he was chosen to rule after the death of his uncle, the Guangxu Emperor. His regent abdicated on his behalf in 1912. Puyi was restored to the throne briefly in 1917 but abdicated again due to the rise and fall of warlord factions. He was named Emperor of Manchukuo in 1931 after the puppet state was formed following the Japanese invasion and collaborated with the Japanese, although not always willingly or happily, until the end of World War II in 1945. He lived out the rest of his life on mainland China, spending the first decade of the PRC in a war criminal reformation camp then living as a gardener. He died of natural causes under the protection of the CCP during the Cultural Revolution.

become President of the new Republic of China, to which Sun and the Provisional Government agreed. Between 1912 and 1915, Yuan centralised power in the hands of the President, eliminated rivals and rival parties, and in 1915, attempted to name himself Emperor of China. The move was widely unpopular and led to a new round of provincial secessions. Yuan died of ill health after abdicating as Emperor, but without relinquishing the Presidency. Political control then fell to the provincial governors whom Yuan had installed for their military and personal connections. The military leaders and the provinces formed into factions that created a fragmented China. The death of Yuan in 1916 and the rise of independent military warlords in the provinces ended the period of the 1911 Revolution. While the 1911 Revolution overthrew the Qing dynasty and ended the institution of the monarchy, it failed to make deeper changes to the Chinese economy and society or build any lasting institutions of governance to replace the monarchy.⁹⁹

III. Outline

Chapter 1 examines the dispersal of Mao's narrative of the 1911 Revolution through the CCP between 1935 and 1945. Mao built his narrative of the 1911 Revolution on the themes of the United Front, class analysis, the periodisation of history and the unique nature of the Chinese revolution. These themes served Mao's political goal of establishing his uncontested power over the CCP and spreading his thought. Mao Zedong's primary motivation for crafting a

⁹⁹ Zarrow notes that the 1911 Revolution changed the villages for the worse by destroying traditional gentry and replacing them with warlords; Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 90-91. Rankin argues that the revolution did not go deep enough due to organisational failures; Mary Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902-1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 219. Lin argues that no new worldview was there to replace the failure of tradition after the 1911 Revolution; Lin Yü-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness; Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 16-19. Multiple authors note the trend within Chinese intellectuals to find short-cuts to leap forward by attacking traditional culture and ideology, with each failed revolutionary movement pushing intellectuals to dig deeper for a further leap: Michael Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911: The Birth of Modern Chinese Radicalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 242-3; Mary C. Wright, ed., *China in Revolution, the First Phase: 1900-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). Reynolds even argues that the real changes to Chinese society came from prior Qing Dynasty reforms and that the 1911 Revolution only made those changes permanent; Douglas Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzhen Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1993), 1.

master narrative of history and his use of the 1911 Revolution in that master narrative between 1935 and 1945, was to prove his standing as a theorist and rightful leader of the CCP. Mao also used the United Front to prove his own ability to interpret Marxism for the Chinese revolution. The master narrative played a key role in defining and defeating his enemies within the Party, as well as in providing study materials for the 1942 Rectification Movement, which firmly established Mao as leader of the CCP. The chapter surveys the historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution in CCP publications, in Yan'an and Chongqing, to show how Mao's master narrative of history, and therefore his thought, became accepted throughout the CCP during this period.

Chapter 2 shows that Mao and the CCP employed Mao's master narrative of the 1911 Revolution against his political rivals, Chiang Kai-shek 蒋介石 (1887-1975)¹⁰⁰ and the Nationalist Party, between 1945 and 1949. The contest between the CCP and Nationalist Party over the legacy of the 1911 Revolution, and particularly the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, was a crucial factor in the war of words between the CCP and Nationalists. CCP historians presented a slightly modified version of Mao's master narrative to discredit Chiang's narrative of history and win public sympathy for the CCP's cause. The CCP won the battle for the legitimacy to rule China via the legacy of Sun and the 1911 Revolution, which influenced the political and military war between the parties.

Chapter 3 examines the debates which occurred among historians of the 1911 Revolution during the early years of the PRC, from 1949 to 1957. After the CCP's victory in 1949, the CCP intentionally exerted less control over historiography, which allowed historians to comment on the contemporary political debate which concerned the place of the bourgeoisie in the PRC.

¹⁰⁰ Chiang Kai-shek (pinyin: Jiang Jieshi) was the leader of the KMT from 1925 who violently opposed the spread of communism and the CCP in China. I use the common transliteration of his name rather than the pinyin throughout this thesis. See Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Historians began to adopt Soviet-style historiography in order to legitimise the adoption of Soviet economic policies in the rebuilding of China. Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution also reflected the political debate over the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC particularly acutely because of the role of the bourgeoisie in the 1911 Revolution. Debates over the position of the bourgeoisie in the PRC and in Mao Zedong Thought persisted until 1957, when the CCP began the Anti-Rightist Movement to purge intellectuals who diverged from the version of Mao Zedong Thought supported by Mao after 1949.

Chapter 4 shows the dramatic shift in debate over the history of the 1911 Revolution which occurred in the years immediately after the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, through until 1961. Many historians began advocating restrictive class analysis, which employed a rigid and deterministic version of only class analysis to analyse historical figures and retrospectively apply contemporary categories of class relationships and struggles into the past. Restrictive class analysis radically changed the interpretations of Mao's other themes and methods, such as periodisation and the United Front, while opening new doors such as discussion over the applicability of Chinese revolutionary experience to the global revolution. Rather than seeking legitimacy for his leadership through United Front policies and the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, Mao's revised master narrative attempted to justify the need for ongoing revolution under his leadership. The new narrative was not dominant at first and many prominent historians, including some of those who led the persecution of colleagues during the Anti-Rightist Movement, opposed the redefinition of Mao's narrative according to restrictive class analysis.

Chapter 5 examines the brief debate between advocates of restrictive class analysis and advocates of historicism between 1962 and 1965. It then outlines the victory of the former over the latter during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Prominent historians opposed the rise of restrictive class analysis by defending the need for historicism—the belief that historians should judge historical figures and events in the context of their times—to

interpret and narrate history accurately for the benefit of the Party and nation. Historians debated whether the sources of history bore the imprint of the class that produced them, as part of the contemporary political debate over class and PRC policy. These debates on the nature of historical inquiry, however, were used as evidence against these historians during the Cultural Revolution, as historicism in all its forms became political anathema. In 1966, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Mao and his supporters persecuted historians and politicians resisting Mao's redefinition of class and contradictions in his master narrative. Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played a role in spreading Mao's redefinition of class and contradictions, but the fall of those historians and politicians who supported the narrative meant that few advocates remained by the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter 1 – The Role of the 1911 Revolution in the Rise of Mao’s Master Narrative (1935–1945)

I. Introduction

In 1935 at the end of the Long March,¹ the CCP arrived in Yan’an. 1935 was the nadir of the CCP’s history but the beginning of Mao Zedong’s rise to power. From 1935 to the end of the War against Japan in 1945, Mao consolidated his power by creating and spreading Mao Zedong Thought throughout the CCP. Mao did this by building a master narrative of history, in which historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played a vital role. CCP writers had adopted Mao’s master narrative of history and, therefore, Mao Zedong Thought by the end of the Rectification Movement.

Mao Zedong’s first goal during the War against Japan was to consolidate his leadership and expand his degree of control over the CCP.² Before the 1942 Rectification Movement, Mao controlled neither the arts³ nor the presses in Yan’an.⁴ Mao also retained many enemies within the Party, the most important of whom were the Moscow-trained Returned Students⁵ who used their Soviet training in Marxism to claim leadership positions in the CCP. In 1935, Mao began preparing to undermine the Returned Students by proving his own standing as a theorist.⁶ He built a theory not only to defeat his rivals, but also to turn CCP cadres into weapons of education and war,⁷ and cause adherents to his theory to recreate themselves

¹ The Long March (*Chang zheng* 长征), lasting from 1934 to 1935, is the name of the CCP retreat from Jiangxi to Shaanxi, after losses to the Nationalist Party forces pushed the CCP from its base in the Jiangxi area. It was during this retreat that Mao consolidated his power over the CCP.

² Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 84-5.

³ Holm, *Art and Ideology in Revolutionary China*, 47.

⁴ Stranahan, *Molding the Medium*, 16-17.

⁵ The Russian Returned Students, or 28 Bolsheviks, is a name for the group of CCP members trained in Moscow between 1925 and 1935 who returned to China and attempted to claim leadership positions in CCP. The group did not always work together, or even return at the same time, but prominent members among the group challenged Mao for power in the CCP.

⁶ Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 93.

⁷ Mao Zedong, “Zai Yan’an wenhui zuotanhui shang de jianghua 在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话 [Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Art and Literature]”, in *Mao Zedong xuan ji* 毛泽东选集 [Selected Works of Mao Zedong], vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), 848.

(*fanshen* 反身) as proletarians.⁸ Mao's goals during the War against Japan were, thus, to consolidate and expand his control over the Party, as well as turn it into a disciplined and powerful Party.⁹

Upon taking over political leadership of the CCP in 1935, Mao began an ideological campaign to bolster his political leadership. He designed Mao Zedong Thought to further his political goals of eliminating his rivals.¹⁰ In this regard, Mao argued that Marxism needed to adapt to China before it could guide the Chinese Revolution,¹¹ thereby undermining the foreign training of his Moscow-trained rivals. Mao, however, believed strongly in China's unique traits and special position in the world revolution, and that the CCP and people of China did not need to be proletarian to bear proletarian consciousness.¹² He believed that mutual commitment to the war¹³ and the shared discourse of Mao Zedong Thought could recreate people into proletarian communists.¹⁴ The political necessities that guided the creation of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history also meant that Mao made a promise to include all patriotic individuals and classes within the United Front.¹⁵ Mao's belief that people could transform led to his offer of a United Front to other political parties and groups in China. The transformation of individuals was successful in Yan'an, but his belief in the ability of people to transform themselves through Mao Zedong Thought was tested when he attempted to spread the Yan'an model of ideological transformation throughout the country after the end of the Civil War.¹⁶

⁸ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 35-36.

⁹ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 93-94.

¹⁰ Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 84-85.

¹¹ Mao Zedong, "Reform in Learning, the Party, and Literature," in *Mao's China: Party Reform Documents, 1942-1944*, Boyd Compton, trans. and ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1952), 12-13.

¹² Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 42-47.

¹³ Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 54-55.

¹⁴ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 157; Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 12; Apter, "Discourse as Power", 204.

¹⁵ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 111.

¹⁶ Ji, *Linguistic Engineering*, 51; Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 303;

Mao's master narrative of Chinese history played a crucial role in the creation of Mao's theory and its spread throughout the CCP.¹⁷ His ascent to Party leadership and the placement of Mao Zedong Thought into the 1945 Party Constitution¹⁸ came about, in part, due to his ability to create a master narrative of history that justified his leadership and thought. This study of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution shows that by the end of the 1942 Rectification Movement the CCP had adopted Mao's master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought.

This chapter examines the historiography of the 1911 Revolution between Mao's ascension to political power in 1935 and the beginning of the Civil War in 1945. The chapter follows four of the themes in Mao Zedong Thought that guide Mao's historical narrative of the 1911 Revolution: the United Front, the unique nature of Chinese society, class analysis and the periodisation of history through contradictions. It first covers and contextualises Mao's motivations for the creation of his master narrative of history, showing that the four themes validated Mao Zedong Thought and supported his leadership. The chapter then traces the spread of Mao Zedong Thought through the CCP by examining the historiography of the 1911 Revolution in two CCP base areas: the Shaan-Gan-Ning base area centred on Yan'an and the CCP presence in the Nationalist Party wartime capital of Chongqing. The two case studies highlight the prevalent historical narratives in each area and show how the CCP across the country accepted Mao's master narrative and therefore his thought and leadership over the CCP by 1942.

II. The Origins of Mao's Narrative of the 1911 Revolution

Before Mao Zedong attained complete political and ideological control over the CCP, he first monopolised the narration of Chinese history, using it as a platform to ascend to his

Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 48-51.

¹⁷ Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 333; Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 153; Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*, 55.

¹⁸ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 274.

preeminent position within the Party. This section covers what Mao wrote specifically about the 1911 Revolution, from the time he became Party leader in 1935 up until the 1942 Rectification Movement. The section then identifies the motives and goals Mao had for his writings and examines how his master narrative of history served those goals. Mao was not the only person participating in the writing of his master narrative; Mao had many other prominent aides who did much of the work for him, expanding and explaining his general ideas. This section, however, will look specifically at Mao's writings to examine Mao's contributions to the creation of his master narrative.

II.A. The 1911 Revolution in Mao's Master Narrative of History

Mao Zedong Thought guided the creation of both Mao's master narrative of history and the subsidiary narrative of the 1911 Revolution. Mao's master narrative of history included far more than the 1911 Revolution, touching on every aspect and era of Chinese history.

Mao attached immense importance to the study and writing of history. In 1938, he began stressing the need for cadres to study history, identifying it as a necessity for correctly leading a revolutionary movement. Mao recommended that:

All CCP members with some ability to research should research the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, should all research our nation's history, should all research the circumstances and trends of the current movement.... To lead a great revolutionary movement towards victory, without revolutionary theory, without historical knowledge, without practical understanding of the movement, will mean that there will be no victory.¹⁹

¹⁹ Mao Zedong, "Zhongguo Gongchandang zai minzu zhanzheng zhong de diwei 中国共产党在民族战争中的地位 [The Role of the CCP in the National War]", in *Mao Zedong ji* 毛泽东集 [Collected Writings of Mao Tse-tung], v. 6, ed. Takeuchi Minoru (Tōkyō: Hokubōsha, 1970-72), 259.

CCP members, however, needed to study the past in certain ways and with certain results in mind to be useful for the revolutionary movement. Mao added:

To study the legacy of our past, to use Marxist methods to criticise and summarise, this is another duty of our study.... Today's China is a development of historical China, we are Marxist historicists, we should not cut [ourselves] off from history. From Confucius to Sun Yat-sen, we should summarise it and we should inherit its legacy. By inheriting legacy, [we then] turn it around and make it a method. In terms of leading the present great movement, this is of important help. CCP members are internationalist Marxists, but to employ Marxism it must take on national characteristics.²⁰

Mao argued that studying Chinese history was a prerequisite to studying Marxism.²¹ This close attention to history was one of Mao's defining characteristics compared to previous leaders and other would-be leaders of the CCP. It allowed him to build historical narratives which identified not only the problems facing the Chinese Revolution but offered solutions to those problems. It also allowed Mao to establish his credibility as a theoretician and devalued the credentials of his Moscow-trained rivals.

Mao's focus on studying Chinese history was an expression of the unique nature of Chinese society in Mao Zedong Thought. Mao, through his master narrative of history, argued for the necessity of adapting Marxism to Chinese conditions. He then portrayed himself as the theorist who had grasped the unique nature of Chinese history, thus justifying his control over the Party. One of the hallmarks of Mao Zedong Thought during the Yan'an period was a belief that China had a special place in the global proletarian revolution.²² Mao criticised other Party

²⁰ Ibid, 260-61.

²¹ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 153.

²² Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 42-3.

members for not knowing Chinese history²³ in order to delegitimise their foreign training in Marxist theory.

Mao presented the 1911 Revolution as one in a list of movements that contributed to and proved the unique nature of China's class development. According to Mao, China's revolution could not resemble previous democratic revolutions because of the effects of imperialist interference in China. China had become a semi-feudal semi-colonial nation where traditional Marxism did not apply. The unique circumstances differentiated its revolution from prior revolutions, meaning that China required a unique theory to understand and answer its problems. In order to succeed, Mao argued that the Chinese Revolution needed to target imperialism. In 1939, he wrote:

Imperialism came together with feudal remnants, and during the course of turning China into a semi-colony and colony, we have also seen the course of the Chinese people's resistance to imperialism and its running dogs. The Opium War,²⁴ the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement,²⁵ the Sino-French War,²⁶ the Sino-Japanese War,²⁷ the Hundred Days Reform, the Boxer Movement,²⁸ the 1911 Revolution, the May Fourth

²³ Mao Zedong, "The Reconstruction of our Studies", in Compton, *Party Reform Documents*, 62.

²⁴ The First Opium War (*Yapian zhanzheng* 鸦片战争), 1839-1842, was a conflict between Britain and China and the first major military defeat for China by a Western nation. It resulted in the first unequal treaty, setting the precedent for many wars to come.

²⁵ The Taiping Rebellion (*Taiping tian guo* 太平天国) or Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, 1850-1864, was the long running rebellion against the Qing dynasty by a syncretic religious group. Foreign intervention and private Chinese armies eventually ended the rebellion.

²⁶ The Sino-French War (*Zhong Fa zhanzheng* 中法战争), 1884-1885, was the war between France and China over control of Vietnam, ending in victory for France and the imposition of more unequal treaties on China.

²⁷ The Sino-Japanese War (*Zhong Ri zhanzheng* 中日战争), 1895, was the war between China and Japan, resulting in a quick and complete victory for Japan and the ceding of Taiwan to Japan.

²⁸ The Boxer Rebellion (*Yihetuan yundong* 义和团运动), 1899-1901, was an anti-foreign movement in China where religiously inspired mobs attacked foreigners in China. It gained the support of the Qing dynasty, leading to an Eight nation alliance to end the rebellion and impose a crippling indemnity on China.

Movement,²⁹ the May Thirtieth Movement,³⁰ the Northern Expedition,³¹ the land revolution,³² all the way to today's War against Japan, all show the Chinese people's resolute and unflinching spirit of resisting imperialism and its running dogs.³³

To Mao, the 1911 Revolution was one of many events which proved that China's experience with imperialism made China's revolution unique. Mao elaborated on this concept in his 1940 publication, *On New Democracy*, by giving the 1911 Revolution a more distinct role within this litany:

The unique points of China's revolutionary history separate its history into the two steps of democracy and socialism, and the first step is already not the normal democracy, but a Chinese style, unique, new type of democracy, called New Democracy.... The first step, it could be said, started from the 1840 Opium War, when Chinese society started to turn from a feudal society to a semi-colonial semi-feudal society. Since then, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement, the Hundred Days Reform, the Sino-French War, the Sino-Japanese War, the 1911 Revolution, the May Fourth Movement, the May Thirtieth Movement, the Northern Expedition, the land revolution, the December Ninth Movement,³⁴ all the way to today's war against Japan, all these many distinct stages, this century of effort, at some level, have all been

²⁹ The May Fourth Movement (*Wu si yundong* 五四运动) was a cultural and intellectual movement aimed at rejuvenating China. It was started by, and named after, a protest held on 4 May 1919 against the Treaty of Versailles and the awarding of Chinese territories to Japan in that treaty.

³⁰ The May Thirtieth Movement (*Wu sa yundong* 五卅运动) was a major pro-labour movement against foreign economic interests and aggression in China. It gained its name after a protest held on 30 May 1925 where Chinese police shot protestors demonstrating against the earlier arrest of strike and student protest leaders.

³¹ The Northern Expedition (*Bei fa* 北伐), 1925-1927, also known sometimes as the Great Revolution (*Da geming* 大革命), was the Nationalist Party-CCP military expedition to defeat the various warlords across China and reunite the country under a single central government.

³² The land revolution here likely refers to the land redistribution of the Jiangxi Soviet period 1927-1935.

³³ Mao Zedong, "Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo Gongchandang 中国革命与中国共产党 [The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party]", in Takeuchi, *Mao Zedong ji*, v. 7, 110.

³⁴ The December Ninth Movement (*Yi er jiu yundong* 一二九运动) was a major movement across the country beginning with a student protest on 9 December 1935 calling for the Nationalist Party to resist Japanese expansion into China.

implementing this first step. These events are all the Chinese people's implementation of this first step in separate times and at different degrees, implementing struggle against imperialism and feudal powers to establish an independent democratic society, a revolutionary struggle to complete this first step. The 1911 Revolution started this revolution with a relatively more complete understanding [of the nature of the Chinese revolution]. This revolution, speaking from social forms, is a bourgeois democratic revolution, not a proletarian socialist revolution. This revolution is still incomplete today.³⁵

The method of the bourgeois democratic revolutions of the past was not applicable in contemporary China, according to Mao, because of China's unique experience with imperialism in creating a semi-feudal semi-colonial society in China. By arguing that the Chinese experience was unique, Mao created the necessity for a new theory and method of revolution. He then argued that his United Front policy was the method of revolution the Chinese nation should follow.

Prior to 1942, the United Front was a signature component of Mao's policy for the CCP. His portrayal of the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution as an example of the United Front provided historical validation for the United Front as a theory. Mao linked the United Front to Sun Yat-sen during the War against Japan in order to outbid Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party for the legacy of Sun.³⁶ Mao originally viewed the United Front as a tool to amass forces for specific circumstances, but later elevated the United Front to the level of 'thought'.³⁷ He relied heavily, again, on the United Front during the War against Japan, and even more so in the Civil War afterwards, to win the support of the minor parties and isolate

³⁵ Mao Zedong, "Xin Minzhuzhuyi lun 新民主主义论 [On New Democracy]", in Takeuchi, *Mao Zedong ji*, v. 7, 151-153.

³⁶ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 102.

³⁷ Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 73; Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends*, 5-6.

any sources of support for Japan, or later, for the Nationalist Party.³⁸ Most importantly, during the period prior to Rectification, Mao used the United Front differently from those also competing for power in the CCP.³⁹ By narrating his policy of the United Front into the history of the 1911 Revolution, Mao provided historical validation for the United Front as theory, and tied his use of the United Front to the legacy of Sun Yat-sen.

Mao used the history of the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen to provide a historical example of the United Front. In an event commemorating Sun Yat-sen in 1938, Mao said:

It was the same for the United Front [as it was for his lifelong persistence for and development of Tridemism].⁴⁰ Mr. Sun not only supported but also developed the United Front: from uniting with other revolutionary factions and parties to overthrow the Manchu Qing,⁴¹ progressing to adopting the policies of uniting with the USSR, CCP and the workers and peasants to overthrow imperialism and feudal forces.⁴²

Mao described his United Front as a development of the Revolutionary Alliance formed by Sun Yat-sen to bring together diverse revolutionary groups and guide China's revolution. The

³⁸ Groot, *Managing Transitions*, 23-29.

³⁹ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 58.

⁴⁰ Tridemism is an alternative translation of Sun Yat-sen's the Three Principles of the People (*Sanminzhuyi* 三民主义), see Stéphane Corcuff, "The Symbolic Dimension of Democratisation and the Transition of National Identity under Lee Tung-hui", in *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*, ed. Stéphane Corcuff (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 76. I use this translation throughout this thesis since it is a more concise translation than 'Three People's Principles' and more accurately translates the word as an ideology rather than a set of principles. Moreover, Mao and the CCP treated ideology as a distinct category separate from principles, making this translation appropriate for a study of CPP historiography.

⁴¹ Before the 1949 establishment of the PRC, CCP writers almost exclusively referred to the Qing imperial government as the Manchu Qing (*man Qing* 满清). This phrase disappeared almost entirely after 1949 and historians instead used the Qing dynasty (*Qing chao* 清朝). Throughout this thesis I distinguish between the two phrases through using these separate translations. Understanding the implications of each term in their specific contexts and reasons why the shift occurred so abruptly would be worth further investigation.

⁴² Mao Zedong, "Mao Zedong zai jinian Sun Zongli shishi shisan zhounian ji zhuidao kangdi zhenwang jiangshi da hui shang de yanshuoci 毛泽东在纪念孙总理十三周年及追悼抗敌阵亡将士大会上的演说词 [Mao Zedong's Speech at the 13th Anniversary Commemoration of President Sun's Passing and Memorial for the Troops Fallen Resisting the Enemy]", *Jiefang* 解放 [*Liberation*] 33 (1 April 1938): 1.

narration of the United Front into the history of the 1911 Revolution gave Mao's United Front against Japan historical precedent and validated its place in the ideology of Mao Zedong Thought. Moreover, Mao traced the origin of his policies to Sun Yat-sen and portrayed himself as the inheritor of Sun's legacy. The struggle between Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek for the legacy of Sun Yat-sen became a key component in the fight to rule China during the Civil War.

Mao identified the contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism as the contradiction that defined the periodisation of history. Due to the interference of imperialism, Chinese society experienced a different path of development and revolution compared to prior bourgeois democratic revolutions. China therefore required a United Front of all revolutionary classes allied against imperialism to complete the bourgeois revolution. Mao defined the two periods of the old democratic revolution and the New Democratic Revolution, or New Democracy, in his master narrative of history. Whereas the bourgeoisie led the old democratic revolution in the tradition of the bourgeois revolutions of the West, a United Front of all revolutionary classes led the New Democratic Revolution. Because China existed in a unique situation of imperialist interference, only a United Front and a New Democratic Revolution could liberate China from imperialism and feudal rule. Periodisation was, moreover, crucial to Mao's master narrative because it created a lineage that portrayed the CCP and Mao as the heirs of Sun Yat-sen's struggle to recover Chinese independence from imperialism.⁴³ Periodisation along the divide of the old and New Democratic Revolutions supported Mao's theory of the United Front and his leadership over the CCP and China.

According to Mao, the contradiction between imperialism and the international socialist revolution defined politics in the contemporary world, and thus determined the periodisation of Chinese history. To Mao, the modern history of China was, in fact, the history of

⁴³ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 120.

imperialism: “The history of imperialism’s invasion of China, opposing China’s independence, of opposing China’s capitalist development: this is the history of modern China. China’s revolutions were all strangled by imperialism and thus failed”.⁴⁴ The contradiction between China and imperialism created the unique, semi-colonial semi-feudal society that determined the path of China’s revolution. Mao wrote that, “Since the 1840 Opium War, China has step-by-step become a semi-colonial semi-feudal society”.⁴⁵ Moreover, a second period within this history of imperialism in China had opened with the USSR’s 1917 October Revolution⁴⁶ and the 1919 May Fourth Movement which brought Marxism-Leninism to China: the era of New Democracy. Mao wrote:

Today’s bourgeois democratic revolution in China is not the normal, old style of bourgeois democratic revolution; that type of revolution is already bygone. It is now a special, new style of bourgeois democratic revolution. This type of revolution is now developing across China and all colonial and semi-colonial countries; we call this kind of revolution a New Democratic Revolution. This New Democratic Revolution is one part of the global proletarian socialist revolution; it resolutely opposes imperialism and global capitalism. Politically, it brings together multiple revolutionary classes in a revolutionary democratic dictatorship against imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, opposing Chinese society from becoming a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.⁴⁷

As Mao pointed out, periodisation depended not only on external events, but also on the relationship between different classes within Chinese society. The leadership of the bourgeoisie defined the period of the 1911 Revolution as the period of old democracy, whereas, the period of New Democracy was one of an alliance of all revolutionary classes, or a

⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, “Xin Minzhuzhuyi lun”, 168.

⁴⁵ Mao Zedong, “Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo Gongchandang”, 103.

⁴⁶ The October Revolution was the 1917 movement which ended the Russian monarchy and brought to power Lenin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to establish the socialist USSR.

⁴⁷ Mao Zedong, “Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo Gongchandang”, 129.

United Front.

Class analysis provided the foundation for Mao's master narrative of history and his narrative of the 1911 Revolution. Mao used class analysis to determine friend from enemy when constructing a United Front to fight against Japan.⁴⁸ Class analysis also defined imperialism, which had created China's unique revolutionary circumstances; imperialism being the main enemy of the Chinese revolution.⁴⁹ Mao's use of class analysis also proved his knowledge of Marxism which undermined the authority of his competitors, even while he departed from the fundamental premises of Marxism.⁵⁰ Mao's use of class analysis, therefore, supported his historical narratives and his status as a theoretician.

Mao allowed for self-determination within the revolutionary classes, in that each class could determine whether to engage in the revolution and the United Front or not: the revolutionary classes included the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the peasantry. In opposition were the feudal forces, which had allied with imperialism. Mao explained that the New Democratic Revolution, "is not the old kind, which was a revolution completely led by the bourgeoisie to establish a capitalist society and a capitalist dictatorship of the country. It is instead a new kind of revolution, led in whole or in part by the proletariat, to establish a New Democratic society in the first stage and eventually a united dictatorship of every revolutionary class over the country".⁵¹ Mao wrote that overthrowing imperialism and eliminating feudal remnants were interrelated: "If imperialist rule is not overthrown, then eliminating the feudal remnants is impossible because imperialism is the main source of support for feudal remnants. Likewise, if feudal forces are not swept away, then imperialist rule cannot be overthrown because feudal forces are the main social base of imperialist rule over China".⁵² The feudal forces' class

⁴⁸ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 78.

⁴⁹ Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 43.

⁵⁰ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 85-86.

⁵¹ Mao Zedong, "Xin Minzhuzhuyi lun", 154.

⁵² Mao Zedong, "Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo Gongchandang", 116.

interests aligned with the interests of imperialism, therefore, feudal forces and imperialism joined together. Any class that had its interests harmed by imperialism could join the United Front of the New Democratic Revolution against the feudal-imperial alliance.

Mao's New Democracy was both a periodisation of history and a theory, one that explained the nature of China's revolution and then prescribed the United Front as the path to revolutionary victory. Mao's class analysis allowed for self-determination among the classes to join the revolutionary United Front during the War against Japan because Japanese imperialism was the clear enemy of the revolution during the time.⁵³ Mao's periodisation of history and creation of the theory of New Democracy and the United Front served Mao's goals of building his leadership of the CCP and eventually China.

II.B. Mao's Motives for Creating a Master Narrative of History

Mao's goal in building a master narrative of history and creating Mao Zedong Thought was to seek total political control over the CCP. All his actions during the early Yan'an era, from eliminating rivals to writing historical narratives, served the purpose of attaining complete supremacy over the CCP.⁵⁴ Although he had already attained political control in 1935, Mao realised that only ideological control could protect him from the fate suffered by prior leaders, including the ones Mao himself had removed from power. Mao, therefore, employed historical narratives extensively to safeguard his power over the CCP.

First, Mao used the United Front policy to establish political leadership over the CCP. Second, Mao built a master narrative that proved that the United Front and Mao Zedong Thought were unique theories, which had adapted Marxism to fit the Chinese revolution. Mao enhanced his ideological power and, therefore, political power over the CCP by claiming to have adapted Marxism for the Chinese Revolution. Finally, Mao spread Mao Zedong Thought through his

⁵³ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 78.

⁵⁴ Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 84-85.

master narrative of history, and his narrative of the 1911 Revolution, to support his leadership. Mao obtained political supremacy over the Party through the employment of the United Front during the War against Japan. Histories of the 1911 Revolution published by Mao and his supporters validated Mao's use of the United Front.

Leaders adopting political policies, usually referred to as lines, and subsequently falling when the lines did, characterised the history of the CCP up through 1935.⁵⁵ Chen Duxius's 陈独秀 (1879-1942)⁵⁶ line of allying with and subordinating the CCP to the Nationalist Party fell, and took Chen from power with it, during the 1927 suppression of the CCP. Li Lisan's 李立三 (1899-1967)⁵⁷ line of taking back the cities from the countryside fell after multiple failures to reconquer any of China's cities from the countryside. At the 1935 Zunyi Conference,⁵⁸ Mao's line of joining a United Front with the Nationalist Party against Japan had taken the initiative, but some Party leaders, such as Wang Ming 王明 (1904-1974)⁵⁹ and other students who had returned from the USSR, remained critical of the new set of policies and were ready to supplant Mao as leader should Mao's line fail.

Mao's line, in addition to founding bases in rural areas, focused on the United Front with the Nationalist Party. At the Wayaobao 瓦窑堡 Conference in December 1935, just after becoming leader of the CCP, Mao made a peace offer to the Nationalist Party, which still

⁵⁵ Wylie argued accurately that the portrayal of CCP history as a struggle between Mao's correct line against all other incorrect lines was Mao's invention to legitimise his leadership; Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 239. Despite the origin and implications of this narrative of struggle between lines, it in some ways remains factually based; CCP leaders prior to Mao fell from power when their signature policies failed in practice.

⁵⁶ Chen Duxiu was a co-founder and the first leader of the CCP. Chen accepted Comintern advice about joining the first United Front, a policy discredited by the 1927 rift between the Nationalist Party and CCP.

⁵⁷ Li Lisan was the leader of the CCP, after the Nationalist Party-CCP split in 1927, who advocated uprisings to take back the cities, a policy that led to major CCP defeats.

⁵⁸ The Zunyi Conference 遵义会议 was a conference held during the Long March from Jiangxi to Yan'an where Mao gained authority over the military and, therefore, over the CCP.

⁵⁹ Wang Ming was prominent CCP member trained in Moscow who returned to Yan'an in 1937, after years representing China on the Comintern, to challenge Mao for power. Wang advocated a line for all work to go through the United Front, similar to the First United Front of Chen Duxiu.

threatened the CCP even after the conclusion of the Long March. Mao argued that the Nationalists and CCP needed to set aside their war and enter a United Front to mutually resist the Japanese invasion of China. Mao's United Front was a practical policy designed not only to resist Japanese aggression more efficiently, but also to ensure the CCP's survival.⁶⁰ Mao's line differed from that of the First United Front⁶¹ and Wang Ming's proposals, in that Mao stressed the need for independence within the alliance. The CCP was to maintain its own army and its own structure, and the two parties would join in an alliance not entirely of equals, but one in which the Nationalist Party did not control the CCP. As with his predecessors, however, Mao's policy of the United Front was a line, a reactive policy that applied to contemporary circumstances only. Until the Xi'an incident⁶² in 1936, Mao's offers had been only words while Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party continued to attack the CCP. After the Xi'an Incident, Mao's line proved prophetic and his power within the Party grew. Mao staked his political life on the line of the United Front in 1935, just as his predecessors had staked their careers on their lines, and the success of the United Front policy between 1936 and 1941 validated Mao's leadership over the CCP.

Particularly after the 1941 New Fourth Army Incident,⁶³ however, the United Front appeared to be breaking down, and with it, Mao's line. Rather than risk building a new line, Mao instead chose to turn the line of the United Front into a theory.⁶⁴ Mao had been working on this transformation of line into theory for some time, but the events of 1941 forced Mao to speed up his efforts and culminated in the 1942 Rectification Movement that put Mao Zedong

⁶⁰ Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends*, 58-59.

⁶¹ The First United Front lasted from just after the foundation of the CCP in 1921 to 1927. The CCP joined the Nationalist Party as a party within a party to support the Nationalists' goal to reunify the country from the rule of warlords. Chiang Kai-shek ended the alliance with a purge of the CCP in 1927, after the fall of Shanghai to the forces of the Nationalist Party-CCP alliance, beginning the First Civil War.

⁶² The Xi'an Incident 西安事件 in 1936 was the beginning of the Second United Front. Chiang Kai-shek's generals conspired to abduct Chiang in Xi'an and took Chiang to meet CCP leaders to negotiate a truce between the Nationalist Party and CCP to fight together in the War against Japan.

⁶³ New Fourth Army Incident (*Xin si jun shijian* 新四军事件), also known as the Wannan Incident 皖南事件, was a 1941 battle between CCP and Nationalist Party troops that nearly ended the Second United Front and did end most forms of cooperation.

⁶⁴ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 121-122, 137.

Thought at the forefront of the CCP.

Moreover, Mao's move into theory served to undermine the remaining authority of Wang Ming and his supporters who had studied Marxist theory in the Soviet Union before returning to China. Supported by the Comintern⁶⁵ and the Soviet Union, the members of the group claimed the right to leadership positions in the CCP due to their advanced training in, and understanding of, Marxist theory. Mao's argument that Chinese society was unique was a direct response to the criticisms of Wang Ming, who claimed that Mao did not understand communism well enough to lead a communist party. Mao instead argued that Wang Ming did not understand China well enough to lead the *Chinese* Communist Party.

Mao built his master narrative and his narrative of the 1911 Revolution to attack his opponents within the Party. He wrote that:

[Many comrades in the CCP] are not ashamed but proud when they understand very little or nothing of their own history. They really understand very little about the particularly important history of the CCP or Chinese history for the hundred years since the Opium War.... Many are ignorant of anything that is their own, yet hold on to Greek and foreign tales.... For the past few decades, many returned students have been making this mistake.⁶⁶

The Russian Returned Students were proud of their training, and expected to hold eminent positions within the CCP as a result; and until Mao's creation of Mao Zedong Thought, that pride and expectation was justified. Mao argued that China's unique circumstances set it apart from other countries, enabling him to criticise his opponents for not understanding that

⁶⁵ The Comintern (1919-1943), short for Communist International, was an organisation dominated by the USSR which supported and helped organise communist movements around the world, including in China.

⁶⁶ Mao Zedong, "The Reconstruction of our Studies", 62.

uniqueness. Mao's narratives of the 1911 Revolution, which argued that the Chinese revolution was based on a unique coalition of anti-imperialist forces, were central to his claim that Chinese Marxism required its own theory and a deep understanding of local circumstances.

Mao did not, however, simply want to discredit particular opponents, as that tactic would only lead to new opponents arising in their place; Mao wanted power focused on himself in the long term. Apter and Saich showed how Mao's storytelling used three layers of historical narratives to focus the legacies of Chinese modern history, and the responsibility for saving China, onto his own shoulders.⁶⁷ His narratives played a crucial role in ensuring that Mao inherited the mantle of Sun Yat-sen. The CCP and Nationalist Party collaborated in the First United Front to turn Sun Yat-sen into the 'National Father', a man who had single-handedly borne the responsibility for saving China.⁶⁸ By the time of the War against Japan, the legacy of Sun Yat-sen was to have led China, and whoever was Sun's true inheritor would be the rightful leader of China. Mao focused on inheriting this legacy and shouldering Sun's uncompleted task in an attempt put himself at the centre of Chinese history.

It is, therefore, no coincidence that Mao chose the example of the 1911 Revolution to exemplify his theory of the United Front as a theory, so he portrayed the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution as Sun Yat-sen's United Front. Mao argued that he had not created the theory of the United Front but inherited it from Sun and then further developed it, making Mao the clear successor to Sun and the next leader of China. This narrative of inheriting Sun's legacy became even more pronounced after Mao had attained dominance in the CCP and had begun to turn his historical narratives against enemies outside the Party: Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party

⁶⁷ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 92-95.

⁶⁸ Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, 408-414.

Moreover, while Mao may have been able to enshrine the theory of the United Front into the operating methods of the Party, it would not necessarily be enough to protect its creator. Mao needed to remain arbiter of the theory and determine how its implementation would change, according to changing contemporary circumstances. Mao's master narrative of history created a history that shaped the CCP's understanding of the present and predicted a future⁶⁹ that relied on Mao Zedong Thought. By creating a reliance on Mao Zedong Thought, Mao created a reliance on himself and validated his continued power over the CCP.

By tracing the themes of the United Front, the uniqueness of Chinese society, the periodisation of history through contradictions and class analysis I will use the narratives of the 1911 Revolution to track the rise and spread of Mao's master narrative of history and therefore his influence in the CCP. I will examine the historiography of the 1911 Revolution in two separate CCP base areas to track the influence of Mao Zedong Thought across the Party: the Shan-Gan-Ning Border Region centred on Yan'an and the CCP presence in the Nationalist Party wartime capitals of Nanjing and Chongqing.

III. Narratives of the 1911 Revolution and the Yan'an Rectification Movement

The city of Yan'an was the heart of Mao Zedong's power after the Long March ended there in 1935. Yan'an was where Mao lived, where he lectured, where he wrote and where he had the most direct control over the Party apparatus. It was, however, also the base of Mao's adversaries. Wang Ming and the Russian Returned Students resided in Yan'an. There, they maintained some leadership positions and controlled parts of the Party, including the presses, prior to Rectification. One would expect that, were there to be a battle over Mao's master narrative of history, it would happen in Yan'an where competing visions of the CCP's

⁶⁹ Howard Boorman, "Mao Tse-tung as Historian", in Feuerwerker, *History in Communist China*, 324.

movement clashed.

There was no great struggle, however, over Mao's master narrative of history. From the beginning when the CCP centre arrived in Yan'an,⁷⁰ Mao's master narrative of history dominated the telling of history in all forums, particularly the history of the 1911 Revolution. While struggle did occur in other areas, Mao's control over the narration of history went undisputed, which is one reason his narratives were able to achieve such prominence. This study shows that during the struggle for power at the Party centre in Yan'an, Mao used the uncontested space of historical narratives to establish Mao Zedong Thought, to build his control over the Party and discredit his rivals.

During the Rectification Movement, Mao and his followers warned of a struggle between two lines taking place within the CCP. Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 (1898-1969)⁷¹ specifically warned of the line of Menshevik thought, or the bourgeois corruption of Marxism, present within the Party. Liu described the threat as a line which had opposed the truly Leninist/Stalinist line represented by Mao.⁷² The lack of debate over the history of the 1911 Revolution, however, shows that there was little opposition to Mao's master narrative of history. Political threats to Mao existed, but Mao grouped the disparate sources of opposition together and portrayed them as a single line of opposition. Mao sought to remake the Party by transforming its

⁷⁰ A CCP group existed in the Yan'an area before the arrival of Mao and the CCP centre from the Long March retreat from Jiangxi. In 1935, before the arrival of the CCP centre, the group had established a relatively large base of operations and won battles against local warlord troops. The leadership of the group was arrested by the first wave of arrivals from the Long March, but subsequently released when Mao arrived. See Mark Selden, "The Guerrilla Movement in Northwest China: The Origins of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region (Part II)", *The China Quarterly* 29 (January-March 1967): 61-81. A biographical manuscript on an early leader of the CCP in the area became a sensitive political issue leading to purges just prior to the Cultural Revolution; see Li Jiantong 李建彤, *Liu Zhidan* 刘志丹, v.1-3 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1984-85); and David Holm, "The Strange Case of Liu Zhidan", *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 27 (January 1992): 77-96.

⁷¹ Liu Shaoqi was a prominent CCP member and Mao's ally and heir until the Cultural Revolution when he was removed from power and regularly beaten and humiliated in public denunciations until his death.

⁷² Liu Shaoqi, "Liquidation of Menshevik Thought in the Party", in Compton, *Party Reform Documents*, 261-263.

members,⁷³ and did so by framing any resistance as a struggle between two lines. Mao did not just want to lead the CCP; he wanted to lead a strong, unified and disciplined CCP. Mao created discipline and unity within the Party by enforcing belief in his master narrative of history and therefore Mao Zedong Thought. This then enabled the CCP to carry out the War against Japan and later the Civil War with the Nationalist Party, more effectively.⁷⁴

This section examines the historiography of the 1911 Revolution in Yan'an-based publications from 1935 to 1945 to show how CCP members constructed narratives of the 1911 Revolution. Since I have already discussed Mao's contributions to his master narrative of history, this section covers other writers to determine their relationship and adherence to Mao's master narrative of history. This examination of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution thus traces the spread of Mao's master narrative of history through the CCP in Yan'an between 1935 and 1945. In addition, I also identify those historians who did not apply Mao's master narrative of history or Mao Zedong Thought, and how their historical narratives and methodologies differed from Mao's own. I divide the historiography into three periods: prior to the 1942 Rectification Movement, the turning point of Rectification with the 10 October 1942 issue of the *Liberation Daily*⁷⁵ and after Rectification.

III.A. Pre-Rectification Yan'an

Mao's narrative of the history of the 1911 Revolution was not prevalent prior to the Rectification Movement. This, however, was due more to a lack of writers trained in Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative, than to a consolidated line in opposition to Mao. There were direct challenges to Mao's power, such as Wang Shiwei's 王实味 (1906-1947)

⁷³ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 12.

⁷⁴ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 93; Saich, "Writing or Rewriting History", 300.

⁷⁵ The *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang ribao* 解放日报) was the CCP-run paper in Yan'an. Editorial control over this paper was a critical point of struggle in the early Yan'an years, and Mao only gained control over it during the Rectification Movement in 1942. See Stranahan, *Molding the Medium*.

publication of *Wild Lilies*.⁷⁶ When journalists or historians wrote historical narratives, however, they had agendas other than opposing Mao's master narrative: they used history to serve the present. Mao certainly used history to serve the present as well, but other historians writing in Yan'an explicitly aimed their historical narratives at the issues of the day, while Mao promoted his narratives to turn his line into theory. Some historians refused to use or support Mao's master narrative of history, but did little to refute or challenge it on a methodological level.

Most history written about the 1911 Revolution—particularly history by authors who had not adopted Mao Zedong Thought prior to the Rectification Movement—was published in the annual 10 October editions of papers commemorating the anniversaries of the Wuchang Uprising. These writers publishing prior to 1942 had no deep interest in building narratives of the 1911 Revolution. Instead, they took advantage of the commemoration of the beginning of the 1911 Revolution to write a narrative immediately relevant to the present.

The editorial in *Liberation*⁷⁷ on 10 October 1940 is a typical example. Noting the failures of the 1911 Revolution, the article stated:

From the point of the bourgeois national revolution, the 1911 Revolution failed. The revolution neither overthrew the imperialist powers in China nor did it establish a truly democratic system of government. It neither eliminated feudal exploitation in the economy nor did it solve the peasants' land problem. Why did the revolution fail? One, because some in the revolutionary party conciliated with the old powers; and two, because they did not rouse the wide masses.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Wang Shiwei was an author, CCP member and critic of Mao who Maoists targeted during the Rectification Movement for his work *Wild Lilies* (*Ye baihehua* 野百合花), which criticised the inequality in Yan'an. The CCP imprisoned Wang after Rectification and executed him as the CCP retreated from Yan'an during the Civil War.

⁷⁷ *Liberation* (*Jiefang* 解放) was an irregularly published magazine run by the CCP during the early years in Yan'an. It merged with several other publications to form the *Liberation Daily* in 1941.

⁷⁸ "Jinian Shuangshijie 纪念双十节 [Remembering Double Ten Day]", *Jiefang* 86 (10 October 1940): 6.

This narrative did not link feudalism and imperialism, but treated them as separate problems in a list of many that contributed to the failure of the 1911 Revolution. Instead, the article criticised Wang Jingwei 汪精卫 (1883-1944)⁷⁹ for collaborating with Japan, and compared Wang to the Revolutionary Alliance's collaboration with Yuan Shikai and the Beiyang Army⁸⁰ immediately following the Wuchang Uprising. The editorial also targeted Chiang Kai-shek: "Unfortunately, during the key juncture of the 1927 Great Revolution [Northern Expedition], a group of people could not abide by Mr. Yat-sen's revolutionary lessons, and even opposed Mr. Yat-sen's revolutionary lessons, thus reliving the failure of the 1911 Revolution".⁸¹ Although unnamed, Chiang was the target of criticism. During the United Front of the War against Japan, most CCP publications respectfully declined to attack Chiang Kai-shek directly, thereby maintaining the appearance of the United Front with the Nationalist Party.⁸² This did not, however, stop them from making indirect attacks. The editorial ended by exhorting its readers, "If we do not follow the broken path of the 1911 Revolution and the 1925-27 Great Revolution, then we can obtain final victory in the anti-Japanese War, complete the incomplete enterprise of the 1911 Revolution and establish an independent, free and prosperous republic of true Tridemism!"⁸³ The 'broken path' of the 1911 Revolution meant collaborating with those who would harm the revolution. The article suggested that if the revolutionaries did not collaborate with the Japanese, the war would be brought to a successful conclusion. This was not a challenge to Mao's narrative of history, but an attack on Wang Jingwei and Chiang Kai-shek, comparing them unfavourably to historical precedents.

⁷⁹ Wang Jingwei was a participant in the 1911 Revolution and leader in the Nationalist Party opposed to many of Chiang Kai-shek's policies. Wang collaborated with Japan during the war to form a puppet government.

⁸⁰ The Beiyang Army [*Beiyang jun fa* 北洋军阀] was a semi-private army inherited by Yuan Shikai from his mentor and widely acknowledged as the most potent fighting force in early 20th century China. After Yuan's death, factionalism within the leadership split the Beiyang Army into many separate forces, creating the Warlord Period.

⁸¹ "Jinian Shuangshijie", 6.

⁸² Stranahan, *Molding the Medium*, 24.

⁸³ "Jinian Shuangshijie", 6.

Prior to Rectification, Wu Yuzhang 吴玉章 (1878-1966)⁸⁴ did not narrate history with any specific methodology other than autobiography. Reminiscing on how he became a member of the CCP in a 1941 *Liberation Daily* article, Wu recounted his life prior to joining the Party, writing, “In 1905, Sun Yat-sen put forth his Tridemism in Nanjing, taking the old style Anti-Manchu nationalism and replacing it with bourgeois revolutionary nationalism, democracy and people’s livelihood. This was the first time China had bourgeois revolutionary theory, and at the same time we organised a revolutionary political party: the Revolutionary Alliance. It was also my first time stepping onto the stage of the modern revolution”.⁸⁵ Wu argued that the Revolutionary Alliance played the role of the bearer of bourgeois revolutionary theory and not that it was an exemplar of Mao’s United Front. The Revolutionary Alliance was important to Wu because it introduced bourgeois revolutionary theory to China. Wu wrote:

Because I thought the struggle was not yet complete, we could only prepare to struggle longer.... So, I did not become a minister or a bureaucrat, and moved to anarchism. Actually, at the time I thought that after the revolution, society was still fake and cheated people and there were few ways to reform society. Not long after Yuan Shikai [became] reactionary and Second Revolution⁸⁶ began, I again became active. But this unorganised, un-theoretical revolution was quickly defeated.⁸⁷

According to Wu, the Second Revolution failed not due to its class nature or its lack of a United Front, but because it lacked theory. The introduction of new theories defined Wu Yuzhang’s periodisation of history. Wu’s article did not refute Mao’s master narrative of history nor even engage with it. Wu’s narrative of the 1911 Revolution represented nothing but his own

⁸⁴ Wu Yuzhang was a member of the Revolutionary Alliance before and during the 1911 Revolution and then later member of the CCP. Wu became the first president of Renmin University after 1949 and died of natural causes, after endorsing the early events of the Cultural Revolution.

⁸⁵ Wu Yuzhang, “Wo he Gongchandang 我和共产党 [The CCP and I]”, *Jiefang ribao* 1 July 1941, 2.

⁸⁶ The Second Revolution (*Er ci geming* 二次革命) began in 1913 when Yuan Shikai outlawed the nascent Nationalist Party, which led a short-lived rebellion before Yuan defeated and exiled the Nationalist Party.

⁸⁷ Wu Yuzhang, “Wo he Gongchandang”, 2.

understanding of history. Wu is an interesting case because in 1941, he was dividing Chinese history into periods based on theory. Within the space of a year, however, Wu adopted Mao Zedong Thought entirely, becoming one of the main and longest-enduring advocates of Mao's master narrative of history and narrative of the 1911 Revolution.

While the 10 October 1941 *Liberation Daily* editorial on the 1911 Revolution bore the influence of several themes from Mao Zedong Thought and his narrative of the 1911 Revolution, it also carried a clear statement in opposition to Mao. Attributed to the Central Committee of the CCP, the editorial was primarily history in the service of the present. The editorial aimed to discredit Wang Jingwei due to Wang's collaboration with the Japanese. The editorial blamed the failure of the 1911 Revolution on Wang because he formed an alliance with Yuan Shikai after the revolution. In addition to targeting Wang Jingwei, the editorial challenged Mao's periodisation of New Democracy, writing:

The Chinese people's struggle for national liberation and freedom started a new era because of [the 1911 Revolution]. From then on, the Chinese people's national democratic struggle has continued to develop into an anti-imperialist anti-feudal stage due to domestic and foreign factors (such as the Soviet socialist revolution's victory, the development of the Chinese bourgeoisie and proletariat).... The Chinese people are resolutely following the path of the 1911 Revolution to the national democratic revolution, unswervingly, thirty years passing as if 1911 were still yesterday.⁸⁸

Mao's periodisation of history used the Russian October Revolution to split modern Chinese history into periods of old and New Democracy, defined by different leaderships of the revolution. In contrast, the *Liberation Daily* article periodised Chinese history according to the

⁸⁸ Zhongguo Gongchandang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui 中国共产党中央委员会 [Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party], "Guanyu jinnian jinnian Shuangshijie de jue ding 关于纪念今年双十节的决定 [Concerning the Decision on this Year's Commemoration of Double Ten Day]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1941, 1.

contradiction between the bourgeoisie and China's domestic feudal forces. The editorial identified the 1911 Revolution as a turning point in Chinese history that started the period of the national democratic revolution. It argued for a periodisation of history contrary to that featured in Mao's New Democracy, defined by the contradiction between the United Front of the Chinese nation and the alliance of imperialism and feudalism.

While opposition to Mao's master narrative was scarce, it would be wrong to describe Mao's master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought as hegemonic. Besides Mao himself, the only figure in Yan'an also using the themes of Mao Zedong Thought in narratives of the 1911 Revolution prior to the Rectification Movement, was Chen Boda 陈伯达 (1904-1989),⁸⁹ Mao's secretary and close ally. Chen was a prolific writer and propagated Mao's master narrative effectively, clarifying the role of the Revolutionary Alliance as a United Front and elaborating upon the necessity for a theory to fit China's unique situation. Wylie argued that the history of the CCP, written by Chen, was a history of Mao's line overcoming incorrect lines, which reinforced Mao's correctness and the validity of his theory.⁹⁰ This study of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution shows that Chen Boda also narrated Mao's line beyond the limits of CCP history and into the rest of modern Chinese history. Chen Boda showed that Mao Zedong Thought was the ideology suited for China by writing historical narratives of modern China and the 1911 Revolution that conformed to Mao's master narrative of history. Through his expansion of Mao's brief remarks on the history of the 1911 Revolution, Chen did more to create Mao's master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought than anybody else did, including Mao himself.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Chen Boda was Mao's secretary after 1937 and a prolific writer and researcher on many issues, including history, Marxist theory and Mao Zedong Thought. He came to power of his own and helped lead the initial movements of the Cultural Revolution. Chen was denounced and removed from power before the end of the Cultural Revolution, then in 1981 sentenced to prison for his role in the Cultural Revolution.

⁹⁰ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 239.

⁹¹ Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 94-5.

In one monograph, Chen argued that the United Front of the Revolutionary Alliance was both the source of the 1911 Revolution's victories as well as the source of its failures:

Although [the Revolutionary Alliance] was able to 'Unify the entire country's gentlemen to found the Revolutionary Alliance' and create a revolutionary pact, and although working in this United Front did organise the lower level forces and build sentiment for 'Resist the Qing, Restore the Ming' to utilise these lower level forces, [The Revolutionary Alliance] was still unable to seriously unite the 'Anti-Manchu' struggle with the struggle for the personal interests of the domestic masses. Frankly, although Tridemism's principles contained this unity within them, the basic issue of the revolution was making unity in principle unity in reality. This was the source of 1911's failure, the lack of this unity in reality.⁹²

A United Front enabled the Revolutionary Alliance to organise different forces, but the unity within the Revolutionary Alliance was only in principle rather than in reality, meaning that the source of that unity was transitory. Once the most basic impetus for unity—anti-Manchu nationalism— expired, the United Front broke apart. The United Front of the 1911 Revolution failed because the unity of the Revolutionary Alliance was not based on shared class interests, a lesson Mao and the CCP had learned. Chen argued that Mao had adapted Sun Yat-sen's ideology of the United Front for the contemporary War against Japan, in order to support Mao's position at the top of the CCP. Chen wrote that Mao's United Front was an expression of Sun's Tridemism:

Originally, Mr. Yat-sen's Tridemism came into being from the real progress of the national revolutionary United Front. However, even before there was an ideology of Tridemism, you could still say that he possessed a small yet concrete amount of

⁹² Chen Boda, *Sanminzhuyi gailun* 三民主义概论 [A Survey of Tridemism] (N.P.: Shenghuo shudian, 1940), 15.

national revolutionary United Front ideology.... After the 1911 Revolution, when Mr. Yat-sen took the office of Provisional President... his ideology was a belief that the continuation or breaking apart of the national revolutionary United Front would determine the success of China's revolution.⁹³

Chen linked the United Front to Tridemism to provide a historical example of how Sun had applied the United Front to the Chinese revolution once before. The linking of Tridemism and the United Front also supported Mao's claim to inheriting the legacy of Sun Yat-sen since Mao had adopted and developed upon Sun's ideology. Chen Boda developed Mao's short remarks on the United Front in the history of the 1911 Revolution into a clearer and more meaningful form that validated Mao's leadership of the CCP and spread Mao Zedong Thought more effectively.

As for the uniqueness of Chinese society, Chen Boda built upon Mao's cursory early remarks to show that Mao Zedong Thought had adapted Marxism to China. Chen wrote:

Tridemism during the 1911 Revolution meant opposing the Manchu Qing first and foremost. To oppose imperialist oppression, one first had to overthrow the Manchu Qing's domestic oppression of the nation. This was a correct step at the time. To obtain Democracy and People's Livelihood,⁹⁴ one first had to overthrow the representatives of the most reactionary and most corrupt autocracy of the time: the Manchu Qing dynasty. This was a correct step at the time. Now, Tridemism means opposing Japan first and foremost.⁹⁵

⁹³ Chen Boda, "Sun Zhongshan xiansheng guanyu minzu geming tongyi zhanxian sixiang de fazhan 孙中山先生关于民族革命统一战线思想的发展 [Mr. Sun Yat-sen on the Development of the Theory of the National Revolutionary United Front]", *Jiefang* 33 (1 April 1938): 6.

⁹⁴ Democracy (*Minquanzhuyi* 民权主义) and People's Livelihood (*Minshengzhuyi* 民生主义) were two of the three parts of Sun Yat-sen's Tridemism. The third part was Nationalism (*Minzuzhuyi* 民族主义).

⁹⁵ Chen Boda, "Sun Zhongshan xiansheng guanyu minzu geming tongyi zhanxian sixiang de fazhan", 7.

The correctness of the ideology of Tridemism and the United Front it represented did not change according to the circumstances, only the categories of friends and enemies changed. On the topic of Marxism and Tridemism, Chen also wrote that Marxism was universally applicable, but needed to find the correct interpretation for China, in part, by absorbing Tridemism. Chen wrote, “[Marxism-socialism] in China not only inherits all of the best of Western and global theories... but most of all it inherits the revolutionary traditions of the epoch-making leader of modern China’s national revolution, Sun Yat-sen, and particularly the revolutionary spirit of his Tridemism”.⁹⁶ Chen believed that Marxism was a global theory because it inherited, and developed, all the philosophical and ideological traditions of the particular society to which it was applied. He used examples and arguments to argue that Mao had accomplished the task of adapting Marxism to the specific circumstances of China. Mao had successfully combined Marxism and Tridemism to create a synthesis ideology of Mao Zedong Thought and the United Front.

Before the Rectification Movement, Chen Boda focused his efforts on expanding the themes of the United Front and Chinese uniqueness in Mao’s master narrative. Chen deemed it more important to focus on the United Front and establish the unique nature of Chinese society than to stress class analysis and periodisation. This was in keeping with Mao’s goals. Mao wanted to show the need for a uniquely Chinese theory to solve China’s unique problems, and prove that the United Front was that theory. These two aspects of Mao Zedong Thought best served Mao’s goal of building his power, before the Rectification Movement, in Yan’an. Yet Chen also wrote on the periodisation of history according to contradictions and class analysis in other forums, and the two themes made occasional appearances in his historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution. Chen wrote that during the 1911 Revolution:

The Manchu royalty were the most corrupt force and slaves to the imperialists, so first

⁹⁶ Chen Boda, *Sanminzhuyi Gailun*, 119.

tearing down this den of thieves opened a path to revolutionary struggle against foreigners. Because the anti-Manchu struggle, speaking objectively, actually meant to avoid imperialists splitting up and annexing the country, the progress of history can look back and call the anti-Manchu nationalist struggle an anti-imperialist national struggle. The new developments since this struggle, such as the new historical circumstances and the self-aware people on the political scene, cannot be separated from it.⁹⁷

According to Chen, the 1911 Revolution marked one step towards creating a new stage in Chinese history, and was part of the anti-imperialist age, if not a crucial turning point in the periodisation of Chinese history. Chen also used class analysis to justify the overthrow of the Qing. It was not race which necessitated the end of the Qing; the Qing dynasty's class status as a feudal class and its alliance with imperialism meant that the Qing needed to be overthrown.

III.B. The 10 October 1942 Edition of the *Liberation Daily*

The turning point in the writing of the history of the 1911 Revolution, when Mao's narrative became dominant, occurred on the thirty-first anniversary of the Wuchang Uprising: 10 October 1942. The first stages of the Rectification movement in Yan'an had been completed, and the CCP was preparing for more. The Rectification Movement continued into 1944, but had substantially altered the CCP in Yan'an by 1942, as the historiography of the 1911 Revolution shows. The *Liberation Daily* came under Mao's control during the Rectification Movement in 1942, and Mao wasted no time converting it into his mouthpiece, prohibiting opposition opinions while teaching his master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought to CCP cadres.⁹⁸ The histories of the 1911 Revolution written in the 10 October 1942 issue of the *Liberation Daily* display Mao's dominance over the CCP.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 29-30.

⁹⁸ Stranahan, *Molding the Medium*, 165.

Many Party members of various ranks published articles in the 10 October 1942 edition of the *Liberation Daily*, marking the largest celebration of the 1911 Revolution, in print by the CCP, to that date. The publication of multiple articles from many different authors was an example of learning through practice. Mao and his supporters expected the authors of the various works to follow Mao's master narrative by employing Mao Zedong Thought through the themes of the United Front, Chinese uniqueness, class analysis and periodisation in their coverage of the 1911 Revolution. Their statements displayed the authors' understanding of and adherence to Mao Zedong Thought and validated Mao's control of the CCP. The 10 October 1942 issue of the *Liberation Daily* also served as an example for those outside of Yan'an, as yet untouched by the Rectification Movement, of how a rectified Party ought to look and behave.

The United Front was the most prominent theme throughout the 10 October 1942 issue of the *Liberation Daily*, reflecting its importance to the validation of Mao's leadership over the CCP. Two days prior to 10 October, the *Liberation Daily* printed an editorial which set the theme of the United Front for the 10 October edition. The editorial stated that, "The Revolutionary Alliance included all classes in a United Front organisation; from this we can see that the United Front of the Revolutionary Alliance already exhibited its effectiveness in the Chinese revolution.... It is evident that the establishment of a United Front is beneficial for the Revolution and that the splitting apart of a United Front can bring only harm to the Revolution".⁹⁹ The main editorial from the 10th echoed this sentiment: "On this the 31st anniversary of October 10th, we take up the unfulfilled project of these martyrs, and loyally implement 'Unity in the war of resistance, unity in building the country'".¹⁰⁰ The United Front was the lesson and legacy of the 1911 Revolution, and the continued Chinese revolution could

⁹⁹ "Bianfu tongzhi fanjia yi ri jinian Shuangshijie quanshi xuan guoqi juxing qingzhu 边府通知房价一日纪念双十节全市悬国旗举行庆祝 [The Border Region Government Announces a Holiday to Celebrate Double Ten Day, the Whole City Raises the Flag in Celebration]", *Jiefang ribao* 8 October 1942, 2.

¹⁰⁰ "Jinian Xinhai Geming 纪念辛亥革命 [Commemorating the 1911 Revolution]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1942, 1.

succeed only by following the United Front. Zhu De 朱德 (1886-1976)¹⁰¹ also wrote on the most important lesson learned from the 1911 Revolution and its failure:

[Be] dedicated to the United Front. General Cai [E] 蔡锷 (1882-1916)¹⁰² was... regarded by the Revolutionary Alliance members and other personages of no party affiliation as publicly minded and incorruptible, never working for his own profit, and the Revolutionary Alliance comrades all worked together with him to face the situation. Yunnan's new independence, the success of the armies, all stemmed from the various parties and non-affiliated persons working together.¹⁰³

Zhu reimagined his own history of working with Cai E to fit into Mao's master narrative and the theme of the United Front during the 1911 Revolution. Lin Boqu 林伯渠 (1886-1960),¹⁰⁴ another veteran of the 1911 Revolution, added simply that, "The Chinese revolution teaches us that when the United Front is accomplished, the revolution succeeds. If not, then [the revolution] fails".¹⁰⁵ These authors presented the United Front and Mao Zedong Thought as the unifying ideology for China and for the CCP, justifying Mao's leadership of the Party. This issue of the *Liberation Daily*, dedicated to remembering the 1911 Revolution, made it clear that the United Front was a theory developed from China's revolutionary situation, and that Mao's development of the United Front theory established Mao's credentials as a theorist and the paramount leader of the CCP.

¹⁰¹ Zhu De was a participant in the 1911 Revolution and one of the most important military leaders of the CCP from the 1927 Jiangxi Soviet through to his death.

¹⁰² Cai E, also known as Cai Songpo 蔡松坡, was a leader and general of the 1911 Revolution in Yunnan, though not a member of the Revolutionary Alliance. Cai opposed Yuan Shikai and led the Second Revolution in Yunnan as well.

¹⁰³ Zhu De "Xinhai huiyi 辛亥回忆 [Recollections from 1911]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1942, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Lin Boqu was a participant in the 1911 Revolution and later a member of the CCP. Lin was close associate of Sun Yat-sen and an early adopter of Marxism as well as one of the oldest participants of the Long March.

¹⁰⁵ "Lin Lao tan Xinhai Geming 林老谈辛亥革命 [Old Lin Talks about the 1911 Revolution]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1942, 2.

The other major theme in this issue of the *Liberation Daily* was periodisation through contradictions. The main reason for this was the connection between the periodisation of New Democracy and the United Front in Mao Zedong Thought. The era of New Democracy was a carefully defined and demarcated period of history. Authors who agreed to structure their historical narratives around the periodisation of New Democracy did so to show their allegiance to Mao's master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought. The main editorial of the day illustrated this:

The 1911 Revolution occurred during the age when global capitalism had already entered its imperialist stage, the age just before the global proletarian revolution, so during this time China's bourgeois democratic revolution could not become a part of the global bourgeois revolution, and could only go on to become part of the global proletarian revolution. At the time, however, [the global proletarian] revolution was still only fermenting, and had not started.... These objective circumstances made it impossible for the 1911 Revolution not to fail midway through. This shows that the backwards Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution cannot be completed under old democracy, it must surpass this boundary, and New Democracy must complete it.¹⁰⁶

The contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation meant that China experienced a stage in history unique to Chinese circumstances. The next day, Fan Wenlan 范文澜 (1893-1969)¹⁰⁷ also wrote, "The course of the Chinese revolution must be separated into two steps... before the October Revolution was the old democratic revolution. After the October Revolution is the New Democratic revolution. So, from the 1840 Opium war, through the Taiping Rebellion, the Hundred Days Reform, the Sino-French War, the Sino-Japanese War and

¹⁰⁶ "Jinian Xinhai Geming".

¹⁰⁷ Fan Wenlan was a member of the CCP and a prominent Marxist historian and educator. He worked in the Central Propaganda Department and the university in Yan'an during the war before becoming head of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Modern History Office after the war. He was persecuted and driven to suicide during the Cultural Revolution.

all the way to the 1911 Revolution, all belong to the phase of the old democratic revolution”.¹⁰⁸ Through these and comparable articles, the *Liberation Daily* highlighted the periods of history which led to New Democracy, making this the template for later periodisation. Periodisation did not stand alone as an end in itself: it was one part of the argument for the necessity of the United Front and the spread of Mao Zedong Thought. The new arrangement of classes defined the United Front of the New Democratic period, with the proletariat, peasantry and parts of the bourgeoisie working together to overthrow imperialists and their allied feudal forces, as part of the global revolution against imperialism.

The 10 October 1942 issue of *Liberation Daily* and the chorus of articles all agreeing on the same narrative showed that Mao’s master narrative of history united the Party in a belief in the United Front and Mao Zedong Thought. Mao’s master narrative of history created a periodisation of history and a system of class analysis that argued for the unique circumstances of the Chinese revolution. Mao emphasised the necessity and theoretical soundness of the United Front through the creation of the period of New Democracy. In this, Mao defined the nature of the world prior to and after the Soviet October Revolution. United ideologically, as showcased in the 10 October 1942 edition of the *Liberation Daily*, the Party proved itself united politically under Mao’s leadership. CCP members of many ranks and levels of experience, even ones that had previously not subscribed to Mao’s narratives, now all understood and applied Mao Zedong Thought and Mao’s master narrative of history. The historical narrative of the 1911 Revolution presented in the 10 October 1942 edition of the *Liberation Daily* was both a test and an example. As a test, it determined the effectiveness of the Rectification Movement by finding how many in the CCP followed Mao’s master narrative of history, Mao Zedong Thought and the leadership of Mao Zedong. As an example, it showed

¹⁰⁸ Fan Wenlan, “Kaishi le yu jieshu le jiu Minzhuzhuyi geming de Xinhai Geming 开始了与结束了旧民主主义的辛亥革命 [The 1911 Revolution, Start and End of the Old Democratic Revolution]”, *Jiefang ribao* 11 October 1942, 4.

other base areas what to expect from Rectification.

III.C. Post-Rectification Yan'an

After the 10 October 1942 display of ideological control over the Party, no counter or even divergent narratives of the 1911 Revolution appeared in the *Liberation Daily*. In fact, more voices joined, and continued to add nuance to, Mao's narrative of the 1911 Revolution.

Writers for the *Liberation Daily* elaborated on the employment of a United Front in the 1911 Revolution; the source and effect of Chinese uniqueness; the significance that the periodisation of history via contradictions had for the Chinese revolutionary movement; and for the class analysis of China. CCP writers also applied narratives of the 1911 Revolution to compare the failures of the 1911 Revolution to the failures of the contemporary Nationalist Party. The trend of criticising the Nationalist Party through historical narratives increased exponentially leading up to the Civil War of 1945-1949. The change shows that Mao's goals were shifting from consolidating his leadership over the CCP, to claiming the leadership of all China, a topic I cover in detail in the next chapter.

As the War against Japan appeared to be ending, Mao and the CCP added new aspects to the portrayal of the United Front, through coverage of the successes and failures of the 1911 Revolution, as well as the CCP's unity with the masses. The changes to the coverage of the United Front displayed the changing nature of Mao Zedong Thought. Mao Zedong Thought adapted to the circumstances of the Chinese Revolution as its focus shifted from resisting Japan to fighting the Nationalist Party for control over China.

After the Rectification Movement, historians addressed the new issue of explaining how the United Front remained the correct theory for China despite its failure in the 1911 Revolution. Journalists at the *Liberation Daily* in Yan'an identified that the main issue facing the United Front was to determine who was an enemy and who was a friend, which the Revolutionary

Alliance had failed to determine properly. In 1944, Xu Fanting 续范亭 (1893-1947)¹⁰⁹ wrote:

The Nationalist Party used to be the Revolutionary Alliance, and prior to 1911, the Revolutionary Alliance's nationalist ideology was very noble, and because of this was able to topple the Manchu Qing. In 1912, it became the Nationalist Party and accepted many old politicians, bureaucrats and military men [into its ranks].

Moreover, this group began to corrupt the Revolutionary Alliance, and these new politicians and bureaucrats began walking a counterrevolutionary road.¹¹⁰

Xu further noted that Sun Yat-sen's reorganisation of the Nationalist Party, in 1924, temporarily saved the organisation, but that Chiang Kai-shek subsequently ruined the Nationalist Party again by readmitting the same counterrevolutionary elements. Constantly portrayed as an example of the United Front by the CCP, the Revolutionary Alliance, on two occasions, proved that a United Front had to be careful when distinguishing enemies from friends. Allowing class enemies into the United Front led to its failure and that of the revolution.

In an article in the same issue of the *Liberation Daily*, Fan Wenlan wrote of the Revolutionary Alliance that, "this United Front organisation's overseas and domestic membership reached around 10,000, and its revolutionary influence spread across the country. However, because of this it was threatened militarily and confined mostly to Guangdong,¹¹¹ and it was not really

¹⁰⁹ Xu Fanting was a member of the Revolutionary Alliance and later Nationalist Party. He was a military leader in Shanxi for the New Fourth Army during the War against Japan and died of sickness in Yan'an. He was posthumously awarded membership in the CCP.

¹¹⁰ Xu Fanting, "Guonan yanzhong zhong jinian guoqing 国难严重中纪念国庆 [Commemorating National Day Amidst the Serious National Crisis]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1944, 4.

¹¹¹ The author noted that, while Revolutionary Alliance propaganda spread throughout the country and influenced many, its ability to lead and organise military uprisings was confined the Guangdong area. The author attributes this to the military threat of the Qing, though there are many other explanations; chiefly, that working through overseas Chinese networks limited the Revolutionary Alliance to South China. Most importantly, and the point of the author's argument, is that there were no Revolutionary Alliance branches or members in Wuchang, making the organisation unable to lead the uprising which began the 1911 Revolution.

able to be at the site of the 1911 Revolution's beginning, and therefore could not lead the 1911 Revolution to obtain any real success, yet it was still the representative of the revolutionary line at that time".¹¹² The lack of a military force kept the Revolutionary Alliance from being able to expand into the areas that needed leadership, exhibiting the need for an independent revolutionary military. Once the War against Japan appeared nearly to be over, the CCP stressed the need to maintain an independent military force, even within a United Front, since it was the CCP's only protection from the Nationalist Party. The army became an essential part of a successful United Front. Mao recognised the need for the United Front to distinguish its friends from its enemies and maintain its own army because he heeded the lessons of previous United Fronts, such as the Revolutionary Alliance of 1911. Mao's development of the theory of the United Front in Mao Zedong Thought reflected his changing goals as he sought power over all of China and not just the CCP.

CCP authors also began highlighting the importance of the masses in the United Front after the Rectification Movement. The CCP argued that no United Front could be complete or hope for success without the allegiance of the masses. The 1911 Revolution showed not only how successful a mass movement could be, but also how quickly movements could end in failure once the revolutionary party stopped allowing the masses to participate. The CCP claimed to inherit the legacy of leading the masses from the 1911 Revolution. Kai Feng 凯丰 (1906-1955)¹¹³ commented in 1943 that "The road that the martyrs of Huang Hua Gang¹¹⁴ have told us is to lead the masses, use military uprisings to topple the rulers who oppress the people

¹¹² Fan Wenlan, "Xinhai Geming: san tiao luxian douzheng de jieguo 辛亥革命: 三条路线斗争的结果 [The 1911 Revolution: The Culmination of the Struggle between Three Paths]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1944, 4.

¹¹³ Kai Feng, also known as He Kequan 何克全 was a Moscow-trained early leader and opponent of Mao in the CCP before joining Mao's side after the Zunyi Conference. He was Vice-Minister of the Central Propaganda Department from 1952 to his death from natural causes in 1955.

¹¹⁴ The Huang Hua Gang Uprising 黄花岗起义 on 27 April 1911, also called the Second Guangzhou Uprising, was named after the mountain near where the uprising occurred. The Revolutionary Alliance led the failed uprising, and among the dead—often referred to as the 72 Martyrs—were many Revolutionary Alliance members and other youths.

and, through toppling them, secure liberation. The [movements] inheriting the traditions of the Huang Hua Gang martyrs were following 1911 Revolution, the Northern Expedition, the Red Army's war¹¹⁵ and today's War against Japan".¹¹⁶ Every movement that inherited the traditions of leading the masses was successful, showing the importance of the masses to the movement. Kai argued for the need to have a military force in a United Front. The connection between the masses and the military persisted through time, with one editorial drawing the same conclusion: "The thirty-five years of history [since 1911] repeatedly demonstrate that all armies that stand against the people will only be defeated, while all armies that stand on the side of the people will be victorious".¹¹⁷ The article's case in point was the protests against Yuan Shikai's becoming emperor: the people opposed Yuan's imperial ambitions, so not even Yuan's armies were strong enough to maintain Yuan as emperor. Historians in Yan'an argued that the CCP inherited the tradition of uniting with the masses from the 1911 Revolution.

CCP authors at the *Liberation Daily* eventually stopped applying the theme of the unique nature of Chinese society because they had achieved Mao's goal of establishing his authority within the Party. Mao argued for the unique nature of Chinese society due to the influence of imperialism, and identified the United Front as the solution, in order to defeat his rivals within the CCP. After Mao eliminated his rivals with the Rectification Movement, new rivals existed outside the Party and narratives of Chinese uniqueness did little to delegitimise these enemies.

There were, however, still some reminders of Chinese uniqueness published in Yan'an. For example, the 10 October 1943 editorial reminded readers to continue studying history:

¹¹⁵ Likely refers to the First Chinese Civil War, 1927-1937, where the Nationalist Party turned on the CCP at the conclusion of the Northern Expedition and waged war on the CCP. A truce was reached after the Xi'an Incident to cooperate in the United Front against Japan.

¹¹⁶ Kai Feng, "Jinian Huang Hua Gang yu Zhongguo qingnian dangqian de renwu 纪念黄花岗与中国青年的任务 [Commemorating Huang Hua Gang and the Current Task of China's Youth]", *Jiefang ribao* 29 March 1943, 1.

¹¹⁷ "Zhongguo jundui de liang tiao daolu 中国军队的两条道路 [The Two Paths of the Chinese Military]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1946, 1.

Today we commemorate the 32nd National Day, and call for the taking up of Mr. Sun Yat-sen's and the 1911 Revolution's unfinished project. We call for solving the 1911 Revolution's unsolved problems, and in this time of China's national crisis at the hands of Japanese imperialist invasion, look for a method to save the nation and the people by having everybody study Chinese history and look at the truth that the past thirty-two years has already proven. Old democracy and old Tridemism cannot save China (Even Mr. Sun Yat-sen had given up on it). Only New Democracy and New Tridemism are usable, effective, and suitable ideologies to save the country.¹¹⁸

According to CCP writers in Yan'an, history showed that China's unique situation required the new form of revolution: New Democracy. Mao, moreover, claimed to have developed Sun Yat-sen's legacy to reach his understanding of the United Front and the period of New Democracy. After the Rectification Movement when Mao established his absolute power over the Party, CCP writers in Yan'an served Mao's goal of extending his power beyond the CCP by focusing on the other themes of Mao Zedong Thought, rather than Chinese uniqueness. Mao's argument for Chinese uniqueness served to discredit the Soviet training of his competitors within the Party; it served no similar purpose to target Mao's enemies outside the CCP.

The idea of New Democracy, expressed during Rectification and afterwards, was that of a new period in Chinese history, a period defined by economic and political contradictions with imperialism. Mao set the outline of this era in his writings prior to 1942, and after Rectification many CCP writers used Mao's periodisation to write history. Some historians began to place the era of New Democracy further back into history to encompass the 1911 Revolution and some prior movements, rather than beginning with the October Revolution in Russia. For example, Wu Yuzhang wrote:

¹¹⁸ "Zhiyou Xin Minzhuzhuyi cai neng jiu Zhongguo 只有新民主主义才能救中国 [Only New Democracy Can Save China]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1943, 1.

The Revolutionary Alliance wanted only to imitate the French Revolution, but did not really understand the close relationship between China's ruling classes and imperialism or that the liberation movement in colonial countries was one part of the global revolution. [The Revolutionary Alliance did not understand] that it is not until the victory of the entire world's revolution that imperialist rule will be defeated, and that until imperialism is defeated there can be no victory over feudal military forces. Therefore, the Hundred Days Reform necessarily failed, as did the 1911 Revolution. Only after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, when Marxism-Leninism began to enter China... did we understand that the existence of imperialism was based on the existence of a colonial/semi-colonial state, and that national liberation could only be victoriously accomplished after the fall of imperialism.¹¹⁹

Mao argued that New Democracy originated with the advent of the global socialist revolution: the Russian October Revolution of 1917. Wu, however, traced it further back and argued that the period of New Democracy started in China before the October Revolution, and that the importation of Marxism after the Russian Revolution simply helped the Chinese people to realise the nature of the period. An editorial suggested that even Sun Yat-sen recognised this error soon after the failure of the 1911 Revolution, and he supported the development of New Tridemism, or New Democracy, prior to the 1917 October Revolution.¹²⁰ Mao's master narrative of history was neither static nor undebated, but at the very least, he set the terms for debate since historians adjusted rather than contested his periodisation of history. Fan Wenlan continued to support the original periodisation of New Democracy, writing that:

After the Opium War, China entered its era of the democratic revolution. The Manchu

¹¹⁹ Wu Yuzhang, "Feichu bupingdeng tiaoyue si ge yaojian 废除不平等条约四个要件 [Four Prerequisites for Casting off Unequal Treaties]", *Jiefang ribao* 8 February 1943, 4.

¹²⁰ "Zhongguo Gongchandang yu Zhonghua minzu 中国共产党与中华民族 [The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese Nation]", *Jiefang ribao* 1 July 1943, 1.

Qing government could not understand this principle and resisted the tide to its death, attempting to maintain the feudal system, but in the end the democracy-espousing Revolutionary Alliance overthrew them. After the 1914-1918 First World War and the 1917 October Russian Revolution, China entered its era of New Democratic revolution, where 'China's revolution became one part of the global revolution'.¹²¹

Despite many historians disagreeing with the boundaries of the periodisation of New Democracy, Mao accomplished his goal of spreading Mao Zedong Thought because historians accepted the basic tenets of his master narrative of history. The debate over the specific beginning date of New Democracy did not significantly alter Mao Zedong Thought or Mao's use of the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation to periodise Chinese history.

The widespread use of class as a method to analyse the 1911 Revolution after Rectification also proved the domination of Mao's master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought. One important 1 July 1943 *Liberation Daily* editorial explained the failure of the 1911 Revolution and the subsequent developments in terms of class: "Although the Manchu Qing government did fall, and the Republic of China was founded, the obstructions to the development of capitalism were not cleared, the productive forces could not easily develop. Feudal forces continued to rule our country; imperialism continued to invade our country".¹²² Writing specifically about the 1911 Revolution, Tian Jiaying 田家英 (1922-1966)¹²³ and Chu Taiyi 褚太乙 (d.u.) stated in an article published the same day that "The 1911 Revolution, politically and militarily speaking, was directed against the rule of the Manchu Qing Emperor-

¹²¹ Fan Wenlan, "Shei geming? Ge shei de ming? 谁革命? 革谁的命? [Whose Revolution? A Revolution against Whom?]", *Jiefang ribao* 1 August 1943, 1.

¹²² "Zhongguo Gongchandang yu Zhonghua minzu".

¹²³ Tian Jiaying joined the CCP in 1938 at the onset of the War against Japan and became a Marxist educator and member of the propaganda department. He was one of Mao's secretaries from 1948-1966. Tian was targeted early in the Cultural Revolution by others close to Mao and driven to suicide. He was posthumously rehabilitated in 1980.

led feudal landlord class”.¹²⁴ The authors of these two articles agreed that the 1911 Revolution was a revolution against feudalism that instead needed to target imperialism. Fan Wenlan used class analysis to discover the political leanings of all classes in Chinese society:

Since the Opium War broke down the Manchu Qing’s closed-door policy, Chinese society started to become a semi-feudal semi-colonial society and three paths have existed in China. One is the mass people’s revolutionary road, its speciality is its resolute anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, it is resolutely anti-authoritarianism and anti-defeatism, and it resolutely wants to establish an independent, free democratic republic. Another road is that of the reactionary, obstinate faction of the ruling class, its speciality is supporting to the death an autocratic form of government, opposing revolution, oppressing the people, yet showing defeatism and capitulationism towards invasion, to take China from a semi-feudal semi-colony to a complete colony.¹²⁵

The parallel with the contemporary situation was clear: if the people were on the side of democracy and independence, while the feudal forces sided with imperialism, then the middle path was the wavering bourgeoisie that could fall to either side. During the Civil War, Fan’s argument that the bourgeoisie could either join or oppose the United Front grew in prominence, as I will discuss in Chapter 2. Historians in Yan’an after 1942 employed class analysis to answer the question that Mao Zedong Thought identified as the fundamental problem of the Chinese revolution: who were the allies and the enemies of the revolution. Mao and the CCP identified feudal remnants and imperialism as the enemies of the Chinese revolution and allowed the wavering bourgeoisie to choose a side. The spread of Mao’s master narrative of history after during the Rectification Movement shows the increasing

¹²⁴ Tian Jiaying and Chu Taiyi, “Cong jiu de zhuanzhi dao xin de minzhu 从旧的专制到新的民主 [From an Old Dictatorship to a New Democracy]”, *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1943, 4.

¹²⁵ Fan Wenlan, “Xinhai Geming: san tiao luxian douzheng de jieguo”.

acceptance of Mao's ideological and political leadership.

After the 1942 Rectification Movement, the CCP in Yan'an accepted Mao's master narrative of history and his narrative of the 1911 Revolution. The line of the United Front had become theory, one supported by historical narratives showing the uniqueness of Chinese society, periodisation based on the development of the global revolution and an analysis of classes in Chinese society. Historians conducted their debates within the parameters of Mao's master narrative rather than fighting against it. Yan'an, however, was the heart of Mao's power, as well as the first base area to undergo Rectification. For comparative purposes, I will examine the historiography of the 1911 Revolution in another CCP base: Chongqing.

IV. The Spread of Mao's Master Narrative to Chongqing

The *New China Daily* (*Xin Hua ribao* 新华日报) published in Nanjing starting in 1937, then Chongqing from 1938 to 1947, was the CCP mouthpiece inside Nationalist Party controlled territory. Since the Xi'an Incident and the formation of the Second United Front, the Nationalist Party allowed the CCP to publish inside Nationalist Party areas. The editors of the *New China Daily* were in a unique position inside enemy territory, as it were, which created pressures on the publication unlike those in any other CCP base area. If there were to be challenges to Mao, his master narrative and his thought, it seems plausible that they would originate in a place like Chongqing, far from Mao's reach and in an area where the CCP needed to cultivate its image carefully.

The two pressures pulling the paper in separate directions were a need to adhere closely to central policy versus the need to adapt the CCP's message to local conditions.¹²⁶ Challenges to Mao's leadership, his master narrative of history and to Mao Zedong Thought did occur in the

¹²⁶ Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China*, 76; Wei Hongyun, "Social Reform and Value Change in the Jin Cha Ji Anti-Japanese Border Region" in *North China at War: The Social Ecology of Revolution, 1937-1945*, eds. Feng Chongyi and David S. G. Goodman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 109-111.

New China Daily while Mao and his supporters were codifying his narratives. They did not, however, use narratives of the 1911 Revolution to make those challenges. CCP journalists and historians in Chongqing also came into line not long after the 1942 Rectification Movement in Yan'an. Yet even as the *New China Daily* adopted Mao's master narrative of history, its editors maintained a degree of independence and creativity in using Mao's narrative. The pressures to conform yet remain independent remained the same throughout the pre-Rectification period and the post-Rectification period, a transition that occurred around 1943. Prior to 1943, Mao's master narrative was present but contested; after 1943, Mao's narratives dominated histories of the 1911 Revolution. The unique pressures faced by the editors and journalists of the *New China Daily*, however, forced them to alter Mao's master narrative in ways that would influence debates on the interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought well into the future.

IV.A. The Pre-Rectification *New China Daily*

As a result of the pressure for Chongqing to conform to the CCP centre, the editors of the *New China Daily* used the paper to teach Marxism. One early article equated Marx and Sun Yat-sen: "The dream of the visionary talent Marx was first realised by Mr. Sun Yat-sen during the 1911 Revolution, with the founding of the Republic of China".¹²⁷ Sun Yat-sen was a particularly important figure in the *New China Daily*, even more so than in other CCP papers, because of his importance to the Nationalist Party. The CCP's use of Sun served the dual and contradictory purposes of both acknowledging the official leadership of the Nationalist Party in the Second United Front and contesting that leadership. Equating Sun's struggle with Marxist theory was one way of accomplishing the latter goal. A 1939 article in the *New China Daily* by Wu Min 吴敏 (d.u.) explained Marx's theories more clearly:

¹²⁷ "Jinian Makesi he Sun Zhongshan 纪念马克思和孙中山 [Remembering Marx and Sun Yat-sen]", *Xin Hua ribao* 5 May 1938, 1.

The 1911 Revolution proves that the Marxist-Leninist theory of the development of revolutions is completely correct. According to Marxist-Leninist theory, when the productive forces and the relationships of production come into conflict, which is to say when the relationships of production inhibit the development of the forces of production, a revolution will occur.... One notable fact can show all this very clearly. The event that directly instigated the 1911 Revolution is known historically as the Railway Protection Movement,¹²⁸ which was where the Manchu Qing government wanted to sell the rights to build and manage railways to imperialism, but the Chinese national bourgeoisie fought for these rights. This is a clear example of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production. These basic facts determined the historical significance and course of the 1911 Revolution.¹²⁹

Pressured to follow what the editors interpreted as the will of the CCP centre, the editors in Chongqing used history to teach Marxism in the heart of Nationalist power.

Among the pressures to conform faced by the editors in Chongqing was the pressure to learn and use Mao's master narrative of history. Before 1943, Mao had neither thoroughly defined Mao Zedong Thought nor spread his master narrative of history, but some did attempt to follow his early writings. In 1938 Zhou Enlai 周恩来 (1898-1976)¹³⁰ wrote that, "Mr. Sun was the leader of the Chinese citizens' revolution, and his important revolutionary activities were to incite the masses and establish revolutionary armed power, and to bring together these two forces to reach the goals of the revolution. During Mr Sun's revolutionary movement to topple

¹²⁸ The Railway Protection Movement (*Zheng lu yundong* 争路运动) is one name for a protest in Sichuan over the takeover then sale of a privately-owned railway to foreign interests by the Qing dynasty. The protest was large enough that the Qing court decided to send several regiments of the Wuchang Garrison to Sichuan, which is why the Wuchang Garrison was undermanned at the time of the Wuchang Uprising.

¹²⁹ Wu Min, "Lun Xinhai Geming de ji ge jiaoxun 论辛亥革命的几个教训 [On a Few Lessons from the 1911 Revolution]", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1939, 4.

¹³⁰ Zhou Enlai was an early CCP leader and ally of Mao after 1935. He was the long tenured Premier of the PRC after 1949, playing an important role in PRC domestic and foreign policy even when not holding office.

the Manchu Qing, the revolutionary party's method was to unite with the secret societies and mobilise the armies".¹³¹ Zhou's editorial lacked the refined phrasing of later works of history, but it shows that there were those who were closely following the creation of Mao's master narrative, and who supported Mao's leadership by following Mao's use of the United Front in historical narratives.

Another article, attributed to the CCP Centre, used Mao's periodisation to explain history:

Because of the growth of new international and domestic factors [since the 1911 Revolution] (like the victory of the Soviet Union's socialist revolution, and the new stage of China's national capital and proletariat clearly opposing imperialism and the feudal system), the Chinese people's national democratic struggle has gone on to produce the May Fourth Movement, the establishment of the CCP, the reformation of the Nationalist Party, the Nationalist-CCP United Front, Mr. Sun Yat-sen's three policies, the revolutionary Northern Expedition war, XX's heroic struggle,¹³² and now today's great national War against Japan and the Anti-Japanese national United Front. The Chinese people are following the path of the 1911 Revolution.¹³³

According to the article, China entered a new phase in its revolution due to the Soviet Revolution. The 1911 Revolution remained outside of the period of New Democracy and the United Front. This formulation periodised modern Chinese history using the same standards as Mao and therefore supported his master narrative of history and his leadership.

The other pressure faced by the editors of the *New China Daily* in Chongqing was to show a

¹³¹ Zhou Enlai, "Zenyang jinian Sun xiansheng de weida 怎样纪念孙先生的伟大 [How to Remember Mr. Sun's Greatness]", *Xin Hua ribao* 12 March 1938, 4.

¹³² XX marks in the original. The XX likely refers to the First Civil War or Long March and was removed due to censorship or self-censorship of the history of Nationalist Party-CCP conflicts.

¹³³ Zhong Gong Zhongyang 中共中央 [CCP Centre], "Zhong Gong zhongyang guanyu jinian jinnian Shuangshijie de jue ding 中共中央关于纪念今年双十节的决定 [The CCP Centre's Decision Concerning This Year's Double Ten Day Commemoration]", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1941, 3.

degree of flexibility in theory, and independence from the CCP centre. The editors of the *New China Daily* managed this by adding local flavour to the news and by using local events and history to argue their points. The localisation of content was a policy implemented throughout CCP base areas to help convince the unaffiliated or wavering local populations to look more favourably upon the CCP. The frequent use of the figure of Sun Yat-sen was a part of this localisation in Chongqing. The *New China Daily* praised him often and enthusiastically:

We remember President [Sun's] example, the president's uncompromising spirit and revolutionary credentials, and his martyr's struggle for the nation and the country. The President experienced eleven failed uprisings and thirty years of exile before finally succeeding effortlessly in the 1911 Revolution, creating the Republic of China. Such great revolutionary credentials! In our fight against Japan today, if every compatriot and comrade followed the President's example of utmost fortitude and indomitable spirit, then how could the crisis end without expelling the bandits and rejuvenating the nation?¹³⁴

The mention of Sun Yat-sen in this article served the dual purposes of expressing allegiance to the United Front and the Nationalist Party, while implicitly criticising the Nationalist Party for not living up to Sun's example.

Writers in Chongqing also used local news to gain sympathy from local populations. After the Nationalist Party's victory in the October 1939, Battle of Changsha that halted the Japanese advance towards Chongqing, Wu Yuzhang wrote in the 10 October edition of the *New China Daily*:

The great victory in Changsha these past few days and the decision announced last

¹³⁴ "Jinian Zhongshan xiansheng shishi, gonggu tuan jie kangzhan daodi 纪念中山先生逝世巩固团结抗战到底 [Commemorating Mr. Sun Yat-sen's passing, Consolidate Unity in the War of Resistance to the End]", *Xin Hua ribao* 12 March 1938, 2.

month in the Fourth Congress of the [First] Citizens' Assembly¹³⁵ to implement constitutional government are this year's two great gifts to commemorate National Day.... The goal of the 1911 Revolution was to achieve the goals of Tridemism, national independence, political freedom and people's prosperity. Only by expelling the Japanese bandits from China can we seek national independence, only by implementing a constitutional government can we seek political freedom, and only then can we seek people's prosperity.¹³⁶

The CCP's publications in Yan'an did not cover events like the battle for Changsha, or the meetings of the Citizens' Assembly, in the same way, because they were not as relevant to the people there. The CCP in Yan'an celebrated the 10 October 1939 National Day with references to the 1911 Revolution in the publications there as well, but made no reference to the battle of Changsha or the Citizens' Assembly. The CCP tailored its message to its various audiences, highlighting its policy of using local content and its willingness to compromise with other revolutionaries.

IV.B. The Post-Rectification *New China Daily*

The pressures of both conforming to, and establishing a degree of independence from, the CCP centre remained constant throughout the course of the *New China Daily's* existence. The rise of Mao's master narrative of history changed the content of the paper but not these pressures. Without multiple narratives coming out of the CCP centre, the writers in Chongqing focused on using Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history as a means of obeying their mandate to serve as a mouthpiece for the CCP centre. Due to the pressure to retain local

¹³⁵ The Citizens' Assembly (*Guomin canzhenghui* 国民参政会) was a consultative assembly established in 1938. It comprised of members from the Nationalist Party, CCP and other parties to advise on the United Front in the War against Japan. The Nationalist Party disbanded the Citizens' Assembly in 1948 with the reformation of the National Assembly of the Republic of China (*Guomin da hui* 国民大会).

¹³⁶ Wu Yuzhang, "Jinnian jinian Shuangshijie de liang da liwu he ji ge xiwang 今年纪念双十节的两大礼物和几个希望 [Two Presents and Several Hopes for This Year's Commemoration of Double Ten Day]", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1939, 4.

flavour and show flexibility and independence, however, writers at the *New China Daily* also began to alter Mao's master narrative of history and historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to fit the circumstances in Chongqing. Although, beginning in 1942, the *New China Daily* reprinted many *Liberation Daily* editorials and articles, locally produced articles used local examples of history.

Local examples of history could more effectively argue for Mao's use of the United Front. In one case, after the Japanese surrender in 1945, Liu Yazi 柳亚子 (1887-1958)¹³⁷ reminded readers of Tao Chengzhang 陶成章 (1878-1912)¹³⁸ and implored readers to:

Look at how Restoration Society¹³⁹ leader Mr. Tao [Chengzhang] opposed the peace talks [between the Revolutionary Alliance and Yuan Shikai], and advocated sending a military expedition north, but... he was assassinated. Nobody knows who ordered [the assassination] and even today it is still one of history's mysteries. So, in the end, the other leader of the Restoration Society Mr. Zhang [Binglin] 章炳麟 (1868-1936)¹⁴⁰ did not work with the Revolutionary Alliance, and instead the Revolutionary Alliance admitted many who were not originally revolutionaries into the Party and reorganised into the Nationalist Party. [The Nationalist Party] set aside its revolt and by the Second Revolution... was eliminated [by Yuan Shikai].¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Liu Yazi was a member of the Revolutionary Alliance and later Nationalist Party. He participated in the 1945 peace talks between the CCP and Nationalist Party before becoming a founder of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party and participating in the foundation of the PRC.

¹³⁸ Tao Chengzhang was a member of the Restoration Society and Revolutionary Alliance after the former merged into the latter. After the 1911 Revolution, he led the Restoration Society's separation from the Revolutionary Alliance. Tao was assassinated following the split between the parties.

¹³⁹ The Restoration Society (*Guangfu hui* 光复会) was a revolutionary party led by Zhang Binglin and Tao Chengzhang which joined the Revolutionary Alliance in 1905 and broke out of the alliance after 1911.

¹⁴⁰ Zhang Binglin, also known as Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, was the leader of the Restoration Society and a prominent politician and intellectual. For more on Zhang, see Young-tsu Wong, *Search for Modern Nationalism: Zhang Binglin and Revolutionary China, 1869-1936* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁴¹ Liu Yazi, "Jinnian de Shuangshijie 今年的双十节 [This Year's Double Ten Day]", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1945, 5.

Many in China speculated that Chiang Kai-shek had personally assassinated Tao.¹⁴² Thus, Liu indirectly accused Chiang of breaking apart the United Front of the 1911 Revolution, as well as the United Front of 1945, at the end of the War against Japan. The example of Tao Chengzhang was more applicable in Chongqing than in Yan'an because Chongqing was the capital of the Nationalist Party and residence of Chiang Kai-shek.

Historians gave less prominence to Mao's theme of Chinese uniqueness after 1942 in Yan'an, but in Chongqing it lived on and expanded. Mao had noted that the Chinese revolution was one part of the global revolution against imperialism throughout the colonised world. Some journalists in the *New China Daily* argued, therefore, that the Chinese revolution pioneered the New Democratic Revolution for the rest of the underdeveloped world. The writers in Chongqing gave voice to the underlying assumption in Mao's narrative that due to China's unique experience it meant that China had a special place in the progress of the global revolution. One representative article claimed:

Mr. [Sun] Yat-sen's opposition to invading forces was not due to narrow statism [guojiazhu yi 国家主义] or selfish racial discrimination or an opposition to other nations and other races. Rather, he stood on the side of common reason in opposing oppression, he stood on the side of the oppressed to oppose the oppressors, he stood on the side of the invaded to oppose invasion. Because of this, he not only wanted to obtain freedom and equality for China itself, but he also wanted freedom and equality for all oppressed nations.¹⁴³

Sun Yat-sen, in this estimation, was a proto-proletarian internationalist. Because of this legacy, China's role in the world was to pioneer the New Democratic Revolution so that it

¹⁴² Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, 433.

¹⁴³ "Wancheng Zhongshan xiansheng de geming renwu 完成中山先生的革命任务 [Complete the Revolutionary Tasks of Mr Sun Yat-sen]", *Xin Hua ribao* 12 November 1944, 2.

could spread to other nations defined by the contradiction between that nation and imperialism. Mao and the writers of Yan'an only applied the United Front and the New Democratic Revolution to China, but the historians of Chongqing argued that the analysis could apply to all semi-feudal semi-colonial nations. After the foundation of the PRC, Mao and other historians considered the implications of the Chongqing argument. From the late 1950s until the 1960s, as covered in Chapters 4 and 5, Mao and his adherents fully adopted this alternative interpretation of China's pioneering role in the global proletarian revolution.

The writers of the *New China Daily* failed to adhere closely to Mao's periodisation of history. The decision not to periodise modern Chinese history according to the same dates as Mao was a rational choice made to fit the conditions of Chongqing, and the end of the War against Japan. It was not a misunderstanding of, or challenge to, Mao's master narrative of history. CCP journalists in Chongqing preferred not to split history into periods of old democracy and New Democracy based on the Soviet October Revolution. Instead, they preferred to place the beginning date of New Democracy far enough into the past that the period of New Democracy encompassed all of Sun Yat-sen's life and struggles. This made it easier for the CCP to appropriate Sun's legacy, which was an important rhetorical point across China but doubly so in Chongqing, the heart of the Nationalist Party's power. Thus, setting the periodisation of New Democracy according to the life of Sun Yat-sen reflected the pressure to tailor the CCP's message to local conditions. Chen Sang 陈桑 (d.u.) wrote in the *New China Daily*, "Mr. Yat-sen could certainly not be satisfied by the empty name of republic. Although the Manchu Qing was toppled, so long as one day went by where democracy was not truly realised, then he would not stop struggling with all the forms of anti-democratic authoritarians".¹⁴⁴ In a similar editorial, its author wrote:

¹⁴⁴ Chen Sang, "Zhongshan xiansheng he zhuanzhizhuyizhe duikang 中山先生和专制主义者对抗 [The Opposition Between Mr Sun Yat-sen and Dictators]", *Xin Hua ribao* 12 March 1945, 4.

A full thirty-five years ago today, the Chinese people, under the leadership of Mr. Sun Yat-sen, toppled the Manchu Qing's autocratic regime and established a republic. But the Chinese people's request for revolution, Mr. Yat-sen's revolutionary dream, has not been realised even today. Just look at China's situation today, it makes all people despair of hope.... Single party dictatorship and individual despotism have replaced aristocracy, and the national crisis from abroad, which appeared to be lessening, is actually growing more severe as American imperialism has replaced Japanese imperialism.¹⁴⁵

Many CCP writers used Sun's legacy to argue that Sun would not have supported the contemporary version of the Nationalist Party, and that the CCP had in fact inherited Sun Yat-sen's legacy.

After the Rectification Movement, the journalists of the *New China Daily* applied Mao's analysis of class in Chinese society, in the same way as did the writers in Yan'an. Due to the pressure to create a local message, however, writers in Chongqing used examples of history more pertinent to the audience of Chongqing. Wu Yuzhang closely conformed to Mao's analysis of class in the 1911 Revolution and addressed the question of why the Chinese revolution had up to then failed to complete its tasks:

China is a semi-colonial semi-feudal country, and from the outside had received pressure from imperialism in the military, government and economy, while domestically the feudal-military-big landlord-comprador class has exploitatively ruled it. This made the Chinese revolution unable to obtain quick victory, because imperialists or others who assisted counterrevolution or separatism within the revolutionary camp always attacked the revolution. Imperialism must use the feudal

¹⁴⁵ "Jinian 'Shuangshijie' 纪念'双十节' [Commemorating 'Double Ten Day']", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1946, 2.

military as a tool, and the feudal military must reply on imperialism.¹⁴⁶

Wu argued, as had Mao, that imperialism formed alliances with domestic reactionary classes to inhibit the progress of China's revolution. Wu thus warned that the Nationalist Party must turn away from its alliance with imperialism vis-à-vis its alliance with the United States. One previously mentioned article by Chen Sang explained that Sun Yat-sen's defining characteristic, and the reason he led the 1911 Revolution, was his ability to see the true class nature of the Qing dynasty and its alliance with imperialism.¹⁴⁷ Chen argued that Sun recognised the threat posed by imperialism and the class conflict within China, just as Mao had. Hu Sheng 胡绳 (1918-2000)¹⁴⁸ delved deeper into the nature of the feudal class during the 1911 Revolution:

[The contradiction between central and local powers] is a necessary conflict within feudalism.... This is because the oligarchic politics of autocracy will never consolidate itself into a united country. The Manchu Qing had no answer to the people's force, and because of dissention and discord within the leadership, power devolved to the localities. The riots in the armies during the first year of the Republic were birthed by the power of the local governors in the waning years of the Manchu Qing.¹⁴⁹

Hu applied class analysis to understand the feudal class at the end of the Qing dynasty, a topic not covered by Mao or any of his close followers in Yan'an between 1935 and 1945. Hu's analysis of the Qing dynasty applied more pertinently to Chongqing as a veiled criticism of the Nationalist Party. He implied that, like the Qing dynasty, rifts created by regional power holders and dissention among the leadership plagued the Nationalist Party. Historians like Wu

¹⁴⁶ Wu Yuzhang, "Guoqing ganyan 国庆感言 [Remarks on National Day]", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1946, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Chen Sang, "Zhongshan xiansheng he zhuanzhizhuyizhe duikang".

¹⁴⁸ Hu Sheng was an important Marxist theorist and historian who joined the CCP in 1938. He was on the editorial board of *New China Daily* and, after 1949, was the editor of the internal Party journal *Red Flag*.

¹⁴⁹ Hu Sheng, "Tuifan le Man Qing de guatou zhuanzhi 推翻了满清的寡头专制 [The Overthrown Manchu Qing Oligarchic Dictatorship]", *Xin Hua ribao* 10 October 1944, 6.

Yuzhang and Hu Sheng used historical parallels not only to spread Mao's method of class analysis, but to attack the authority of the Nationalist Party. In doing so, journalists in Chongqing adopted Mao's class analysis, but also tried to expand on those narratives to serve new goals.

The *New China Daily* showed its support for Mao through the adoption of his narrative of the 1911 Revolution in the same way as in Yan'an. This confirmed Mao's centralisation of both political and ideological power, through the creation and spread of his master narrative of history. While room for creative development and adapting the message to local conditions existed, Mao's narrative of history had become dominant, his line became theory and his political control was complete.

V. Conclusion

Mao gained control of the CCP at the 1935 Zunyi Conference; from then on, all his actions focused on protecting and expanding his power over the Party. Wary of the examples of his predecessors who had all fallen along with the failure of their lines, Mao ventured into theory to validate his leading position. By establishing that China needed a unique theory and then arguing that Mao Zedong Thought and the United Front was that theory, he undermined the remaining competition and became a more impressive figure than any other previous leader of the CCP. The United Front was the most important aspect of Mao's master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought during this time. Mao built the other themes of Mao Zedong Thought in narratives of the 1911 Revolution around the United Front to justify his adoption of the policy.

Mao described the United Front as a theory of revolution where multiple classes voluntarily joined an alliance against imperialism, and it was a common theme in historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution, before the Civil War. Mao and his supporters argued that Chinese society was unique and that because of imperialism it could not proceed down the traditional path set

forth by Marxism; hence the need for the United Front theory. The period of New Democracy was the historical age of the United Front against imperialism, as opposed to the traditional Marxist formula of the bourgeois revolution. Finally, Mao applied class analysis to distinguish between the revolution's friends and enemies and allow classes affected by imperialism to join the United Front against Japan.

Mao and his brains trust then used the 1942 Rectification Movement and his master narrative of history to spread Mao Zedong Thought throughout the Party. Mao required all members to learn and apply Mao Zedong Thought during the Rectification Movement. This not only secured Mao's position within the CCP, but also made the Party more ideologically unified than at any other time in its past. The Party had more focused direction and its arguments had more impact on outside observers because all Party members applied the same ideology to their actions and publications.

It is clear from the uses of the history of the 1911 Revolution in journalism in Yan'an and Chongqing, presented in this chapter, that by 1942, Mao had accomplished his goals: Mao Zedong Thought permeated all levels of Party structure and gave him an undisputed place at the head of the CCP. By the end of the Rectification Movement, all Party members who published history subscribed to Mao's master narrative of history, or were at least proficient in using it. CCP historians showed their loyalty to Mao by applying four themes of his Thought in their writings on the 1911 Revolution. Mao Zedong Thought was newly established and was still fluid and subject to change since many authors debated its history and framework. These debates deepened the content of Mao's master narrative, which began to diverge from its original form. Immediately after the 1942 Rectification Movement, many CCP authors in Yan'an and Chongqing followed Mao in ceasing to argue that Chinese society was unique, or they took the argument in a new direction by arguing that China's revolution could provide a model for the global revolution against imperialism. Further debate and elucidation of Mao

Zedong Thought would await the establishment of the PRC, because the primary political target after Rectification was Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party.

Mao also began the task of claiming authority throughout China by using the spread of his master narrative. According to Mao and the writers who now followed his thought, all the victories of the Chinese revolution and its useful legacies lived on in the CCP. Despite the use of Sun Yat-sen in Mao's master narrative of history, however, Mao had not yet achieved the goal of making himself personally responsible for the fate of the nation and legitimising his claim to lead, not just the Party, but the whole of China. Heading into the Civil War, Mao turned the rectified and unified Party against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party in a concerted battle for the legacy of Sun Yat-sen and the leadership of China.

Chapter 2 – Mao's Narrative of the 1911 Revolution during the Civil War (1945–1949)

I. Introduction

There was no hidden agenda to Mao's and the CCP's historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution during the Civil War: throughout the Civil War from 1945 to 1949, Mao and the CCP organised a campaign of publications to discredit the ideology of Chiang Kai-shek and undermine the power of Chiang and the Nationalist Party. Mao rebuilt and strengthened the CCP through the imposition of his master narrative of history and therefore Mao Zedong Thought during the 1942 Rectification Movement. The project of spreading his master narrative not only secured Mao's leadership over the CCP, but also enabled the CCP to conduct a coordinated campaign against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party after the end of the War against Japan. During the Civil War, narratives of the 1911 Revolution played a key role in tearing down Chiang's authority and expanding the power of the CCP and Mao.

With his goal of uniting the CCP under his leadership already complete by the end of the War against Japan, Mao then sought to validate his claim to the leadership of all China during the Civil War. Mao and the CCP organised a publication campaign to discredit Chiang Kai-shek and build Mao's own power, with the historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution playing a vital role. The campaign started as early as 1943 as CCP publications expanded their reach beyond the base areas and criticised the rule of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party.¹ The campaign intensified after 1945, as Civil War between the two parties looked increasingly inevitable. Mao and the CCP viewed the ideological war against the Nationalist Party as "as critical a factor as guerrilla warfare" during the Civil war.² The figure of Sun Yat-sen played a major role in this battle as both the CCP and Nationalist Party claimed his legacy and therefore

¹ Stranahan, *Molding the Medium*, 42.

² Howard Boorman, "The Literary world of Mao Tse-tung", in MacFarquhar, *China Under Mao*, 372.

the right to lead China.³ The CCP even portrayed the economic successes in its base areas as proof of its successful implementation of Sun's Tridemism.⁴ Unlike the CCP, the Nationalist Party had no forms of localised propaganda, a factor which was likely to have led to its defeat in the propaganda battle of the Civil War.⁵ The battle for power, however, focused heavily on the individual battle between Mao and Chiang, which began to solidify the cult of Mao.⁶ The link between the spread of Mao's master narrative and the cult of Mao during the Civil War led to many of the historical and ideological debates, and the purges of historians those debates caused, that occurred after the foundation of the PRC.⁷ Mao Zedong Thought changed and rebalanced the relative importance of its themes in order to meet the goal of attacking Chiang Kai-shek and building Mao's personal influence.

During the Civil War, the United Front defined Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history to most intellectuals. After the end of the War against Japan, Mao and the CCP invited all willing parties to join a United Front to cooperate, share power and rebuild the country, though historians debate whether Mao intended to stand by that promise⁸ or not.⁹ Regardless, during the Civil War, Mao offered to join all parties willing to work together to rebuild China in a United Front. Mao portrayed this United Front as an extension of Sun Yat-sen's principles, which gained allies for the CCP and discredited Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party.¹⁰ Once the Civil War between the Nationalist Party and the CCP began, however, the United Front shrank by excluding forces previously identified as friends, which resulted in violent purges within the CCP.¹¹ The gradual retraction of the United Front to

³ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 298; Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, 408-414.

⁴ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 207.

⁵ Holm, *Art and Ideology in Revolutionary China*, 321.

⁶ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 214; Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 100-101.

⁷ Zhang and Man, *Zhonggongdang shixue shi*, 65.

⁸ Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 105.

⁹ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 90; Lynch, *Mao*, 106.

¹⁰ Groot, *Managing Transitions*, 23-29; Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends*, 195; Suzanne Pepper, "The Student Movement and the Chinese Civil War, 1945-1949", *The China Quarterly* 48 (October-December 1971): 698-735.

¹¹ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 130.

identify more enemies and fewer friends would continue unabated throughout the Maoist period, as I cover in later chapters. Mao's United Front policy during the War against Japan and his opposition to imperialism in all forms also led to widespread support of the CCP, particularly when Chiang Kai-shek used Japanese troops and American assistance during the Civil War.¹² The cult of Mao grew from the changes in Mao Zedong Thought due to the necessities of the Civil War, which also led to many of the later problems in its interpretation.

This chapter examines the historiography of the 1911 Revolution—from the end of the War against Japan in 1945 to the end of the Civil War in 1949—to show how the CCP employed Mao's master narrative against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party. Both the CCP and the Nationalist Party competed for legitimacy within China by writing narratives of the history of the 1911 Revolution. The leaders of those parties—Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek respectively—used historical narratives to claim the legacy of Sun Yat-sen to validate their claims to power. In part due to the unification of the CCP under Mao's master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought following the Rectification Movement, the CCP won the ideological battle with Chiang Kai-shek. Mao's master narrative, however, changed due to the encounter as Mao and CCP historians rebalanced the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought—the United Front, the unique nature of Chinese society, the periodisation of history through contradictions and class analysis. The shift began before 1945, when Mao's goals changed from justifying his control over the CCP to supporting his claim to the leadership of all China. Mao and CCP historians thus altered Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative to counter the narratives of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party. These changes were the beginning of a debate over the interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought that continued throughout the rest of Mao's life. Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played three roles in attacking Chiang and improving the public image of the CCP: CCP writers used the 1911 Revolution as a point of

¹² William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 86-98.

comparison to the present, to undermine the foundations of Chiang Kai-shek's narrative of history and to vie for the legacy of both the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen.

II. The Use of the 1911 Revolution as a Point of Comparison

One of the roles that the CCP's historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played leading up to and during the Civil War, was to create a point of comparison against which to judge the Nationalist Party. Articles that made historical comparisons resembled those written in Yan'an prior to the Rectification Movement: historical narratives served the present by comparing unflattering historical events and figures to contemporary ones. These comparative articles, however, were usually polemical in tone and direct in their criticism. They named their targets, unlike journalism prior to the Rectification Movement, which used allegory to criticise known but unnamed targets. Another point of difference between these and the pre-Rectification articles was that those written during the Civil War employed aspects of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative in their criticisms. The comparative articles of the Civil War used the themes of Mao Zedong Thought rather than merely making comparisons to history, thus linking the analogies to Mao's larger campaign against Chiang Kai-shek. The use of themes from Mao Zedong Thought to make the comparisons also shows the widespread adoption of Mao Zedong Thought throughout the CCP. Moreover, the addition of Mao Zedong Thought heightened the effectiveness of the comparisons in the campaign to discredit Chiang Kai-shek. Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played another important role in this campaign: providing the CCP with many positive and negative comparative examples to the contemporary situation. The three main parallels made during this time were to compare the Nationalist Party to the Qing dynasty, Chiang Kai-shek to Yuan Shikai and the CCP to the Revolutionary Alliance.

II.A. Comparing the Nationalist Party to the Qing Dynasty

Chiang Kai-shek drew the most attention from CCP writers for his leading role in the

Nationalist Party and its ideology, but some CCP writers also criticised the entire Nationalist Party. Most articles that did so, however, specified that their indictment aimed only at the ruling clique of the Nationalist Party. The articles noted that the leadership of the Nationalist Party suppressed the opinions of its many progressive and revolutionary members. The articles that did target the entirety of the Nationalist Party most commonly compared the Nationalists to the Qing dynasty. CCP writers did so by comparing the crimes of both ruling groups. One 1944 editorial asked:

In the waning years of the Qing dynasty, why did the Chinese people hate their rulers so much? There were several reasons, but the most direct for the people was that these rulers oppressed the people too terribly. Mr. Sun Yat-sen, the earliest and most fervent to oppose the Manchu Qing, wrote an article in 1904 called 'The True Solution to China's Problem', and therein enumerated ten Manchu Qing crimes.... But, with their own crimes, have the Nationalist Party not made all the same transgressions, and moreover transgressed them in ways ten times as severe?¹³

The editorial portrayed the Nationalist Party in the style of a falling dynasty, a corrupt and self-serving institution bound to fall. Hu Sheng applied Mao Zedong Thought to link the crimes of the Qing and Nationalist Party by relating the two to their shared dependence on imperialism:

The Manchu Qing government created a precedent, demonstrating that when [a government] is increasingly in decline, it must increasingly fawn on and rely on foreign imperialist backers.... The new and old rulers assume that they can 'build relations with and please other countries', and by these means rule longer, and establish peace and forever keep honour, yet that is a real miscalculation. Moreover, in the final years of the Manchu Qing, the awareness of the people was low, thus allowing [the Qing] to

¹³ "Jintian he Xinhai 今天和辛亥 [Today and 1911]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1944, 1.

put off its demise and live in stagnation for a few more years, something that people today will not tolerate.¹⁴

Hu argued, as did Mao, that because of the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation, the greatest crime a government could commit was to depend on imperialist powers for survival. Hu blamed both the Qing dynasty and the contemporary Nationalist Party for the crime of allying with imperialism. Both Hu's article and the previously quoted editorial ended with warnings that while reliance on imperialism might have extended the rule of the Qing dynasty, it would not save the Nationalist Party. Instead, each implored the Nationalist Party to work with the CCP in a United Front for the good of China. Even the most aggressive of articles provided the chance for leniency towards the Nationalist Party if it would join the United Front and renounce imperialist support. The CCP waged a publication campaign against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party, not just to discredit the latter, but also to gain support for the CCP. By appearing as the less polemical party and offering the possibility of truce—which the Nationalist Party denied the CCP—the CCP gained sympathy and support from other parties and non-aligned individuals, thus politically isolating the Nationalist Party.¹⁵

II.B. The Links between Chiang Kai-shek and Yuan Shikai

Chiang Kai-shek was the most common target of CCP polemics just prior to, and during, the Civil War. CCP writers used both historical allegory and other attacks on his ideology and actions to criticise Chiang. While CCP comparisons of the Nationalist Party to the Qing dynasty only targeted the leadership of the Nationalist Party, and offered leniency to those who earnestly participated in the United Front, CCP authors offered little clemency to Chiang when they compared him to Yuan Shikai. Moreover, the comparisons of Chiang Kai-shek to Yuan

¹⁴ Hu Sheng, "Dang yi ge chaodai fumi shi 当一个朝代覆灭时 [When a Dynasty is Destroyed]", in *Hu Sheng wenji (1935-1948) 胡绳文集 [Hu Sheng's Collected Writings]*, ed. Ma Zhenchang 马振常 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1990), 960.

¹⁵ Pepper, "The Student Movement and the Chinese Civil War".

Shikai employed the themes of Mao Zedong Thought, particularly the themes of the United Front and class analysis. CCP writers vilified both Chiang and Yuan Shikai¹⁶ for the pair's class interests and opposition to the United Front. The CCP's comparison of Chiang to Yuan also served the goal of appropriating the legacy of Sun Yat-sen by arguing that Chiang had betrayed Sun, just as Yuan had after the 1911 Revolution. This section covers three ways that CCP authors compared Chiang Kai-shek to Yuan Shikai: CCP writers authored histories showing that both Chiang and Yuan opposed the United Front, represented counterrevolutionary class interests and betrayed Sun Yat-sen. Each of the three types of comparison used the themes of Mao Zedong Thought to discredit Chiang Kai-shek.

After the surrender of Japan in 1945, the CCP called for a democratic United Front of all parties to rebuild the country. CCP historians wrote histories of the 1911 Revolution to support this call for a United Front by comparing the example of Yuan Shikai's usurpation of the 1911 Revolution to Chiang's bid for power after the end of the War against Japan. The CCP linked Chiang and Yuan by claiming that both opposed the United Front. One 1945 article explained how a lack of democracy doomed the rebuilding efforts of the 1911 Revolution, saying that after the 1911 Revolution:

Mr. Sun Yat-sen decided on peaceful construction—developing industry—to enable China's people to enjoy a good life. Unfortunately, however, the Chinese people and Mr. Sun Yat-sen never had the chance to realise their plans. After the 1911 Revolution, the Chinese people did not obtain a democratic government; Yuan Shikai and the Beiyang Military replaced the Manchu Qing Emperor's position.... Without democracy, there can be no peaceful construction. This is the truth that Chinese

¹⁶ The CCP had from its earliest publications demonised Yuan as a usurper and a representative of the landlord and comprador bourgeoisie classes. His legacy among other Chinese was similarly poor, if worded differently, making the comparison between Yuan and Chiang damning to all audiences. Chen quite accurately notes that PRC historians cast Yuan Shikai as the villain of the 1911 Revolution and entirely neglected to study his popularity and status among the people prior to 1911. Chen, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 195-197.

history since the 1911 Revolution has proven.¹⁷

According to this editorial, Chiang Kai-shek's opposition to democracy and the United Front doomed China to its post-1911 Revolution fate, when revolutionaries gave control of the revolution to Yuan Shikai. Fan Wenlan wrote that the people of contemporary China all realised the need for a United Front to reconstruct the nation and prevent Chiang and the Nationalist Party from establishing a dictatorship after the War against Japan, as Yuan Shikai had after the 1911 Revolution.¹⁸ According to Fan, any individuals or groups willing to participate in democracy could join the United Front, while those who refused to practise democracy were its enemies.

The comparison of Chiang to Yuan Shikai made it clear that Chiang was the enemy of the United Front and therefore China. Chen Boda wrote: "Master Yuan and his offspring all held a similar concept of a so-called 'legitimacy'. They thought that their system of rule represented the legitimate China, thought that China had to 'unify' under their slogans of 'legitimacy', and that unity could not be implemented through a people's democracy".¹⁹ Like Yuan, Chiang's insistence on his personal power would lead to failure because, as Hu Sheng wrote, "Yuan Shikai-style 'unity' is harmful to the people, and is harmful to the Republic of China. The people do not need a dictatorial unity: they need democratic unity. Therefore, the 1911 Revolution's concession to Yuan Shikai's 'unity' was incorrect while the declaration of war against Yuan Shikai two years later [the 1913 Second Revolution] was correct. Realising democratic unity through revolutionary war is a unity good for the people and China".²⁰ Calls for the Nationalist Party to democratise and join the United Front were an important source of

¹⁷ "Meiyou minzhu, jiu bukeneng you heping jianshe 没有民主, 就不可能有和平建设 [Without Democracy, there can be no Peaceful Construction]", *Jiefang ribao* 10 October 1945, 1.

¹⁸ Fan Wenlan, "Xinhai Geming: san tiao luxian douzheng de jieguo".

¹⁹ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qieguo dadao Yuan Shikai* 介绍窃国大盗袁世凯 [Introducing the Great Traitor and Thief Yuan Shikai] (Shanghai: Hua dong xinhua shudian, 1949), 76.

²⁰ Hu Sheng, "Zhongguo fei Yuan bu ke ma 中国非袁不可吗 [Can China Go on Without Yuan?]", in Ma, *Hu Sheng wenji*, 964.

the CCP's growing legitimacy during the Civil War. These calls could discredit Chiang and the Nationalist Party government for being authoritarian, while simultaneously projecting an image of a well-intentioned and compromising CCP. CCP writers drew connections between the historical precedent of one tyrant, Yuan Shikai, and the contemporary situation in China by using the 1911 Revolution as an example. The comparison, moreover, supported Mao and the CCP by portraying the United Front proposed by the CCP as an offer to cooperate in a democratic government.

CCP writers also applied class analysis to label Chiang as Yuan's successor, labelling both Yuan and Chiang as representatives of reactionary class interests. Returning to the theme that aligning with imperialism was the greatest crime of any government, in early 1949 Chen Boda compared the similar paths to power taken by Yuan and Chiang:

Yuan Shikai's first post was training troops, which became the so-called 'New Armies', and because of this attracted the favour of imperialists and reactionaries; this is what gave Yuan the capital to become the great traitor and thief of the nation. Chiang Kai-shek also rode this path to power upon being named Principal of the Whampoa Military Academy,²¹ enabling him to steal the armaments of the revolution, thus attracting the special favour of imperialists and reactionaries; this was what also gave Chiang the capital to become another great traitor and thief of the nation.²²

Chiang not only followed the same path to power as Yuan, but also represented the same classes that resisted the Chinese revolution: imperialists, feudal remnants and other reactionaries. Therefore, Chiang was the enemy of the people because, just like Yuan, Chiang's

²¹ The Whampoa Military Academy (*Huangpu junxiao* 黄埔军校) was an important officer-training academy in Guangzhou where many prominent Nationalist Party and CCP members received their military training throughout the 1920's. Chiang Kai-shek was principal of the school and built a network of supporters in the Nationalist Party military using the position.

²² Chen Boda, *Renmin gong di Jiang Jieshi* 人民公敌蒋介石 [*Public Enemy Chiang Kai-shek*] (Tianjin: Xinhua shudian, 1949), 11.

opposition to democracy and insistence on maintaining his authoritarian power originated from his class interests. Chen Boda also argued that, “After experiencing the revolutionary movement, the imperialists, large landlords and compradors all needed Yuan Shikai to represent them, to collect power to stabilise the order of their rule. The big bourgeoisie affiliated with the large factories also hoped they could use [Yuan] to establish a stable order”.²³ Chen began to include parts of the bourgeoisie in the list of counterrevolutionaries and enemies rather than as possible participants in the United Front. In addition to his alliance with domestic reactionaries, Chiang’s alliance with imperialism also showed his betrayal of the United Front. Hu Sheng wrote:

Because [the Revolutionary Alliance] was afraid of [China] breaking apart, it could only concede to Yuan Shikai’s ‘unity’. Because it was afraid of foreign interference, it could only concede to the ruler picked for the Chinese people by the imperialist powers....

But what is so fearsome about foreign intervention? Can imperialists really do whatever they want in China? Imperialist powers once supported the Manchu Qing government, but the people’s 1911 Revolution toppled the Manchu Qing government in one stroke. If imperialism really wants to support a government in China that the people do not welcome, that they oppose, that they constantly struggle against, then imperialist intervention cannot block the will of the people.²⁴

Hu and Chen employed class analysis from Mao Zedong Thought to argue that authoritarians like Yuan and Chiang were the political manifestations of the class interests of imperialists and domestic reactionaries. The main lesson of Hu’s article, however, echoed the lessons imparted by Mao’s master narrative of history: the United Front of all revolutionary classes would lead the New Democratic Revolution to victory over imperialism and its allies in China. These historians argued that the fight against Yuan Shikai was the same as the one against Chiang

²³ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qieguo dadao Yuan Shikai*, 16.

²⁴ Hu Sheng, “Zhongguo fei Yuan bu ke ma”, 963.

Kai-shek, thus validating Mao's periodisation of the New Democratic Revolution and theory of the United Front. The United Front began to shrink, however, as Chen Boda argued that parts of the bourgeoisie were reactionaries, an argument I return to later in the chapter. The message of this comparison between Chiang and Yuan was that the CCP and the Chinese people had learned from the experience of the failure of the 1911 Revolution, and would not allow class enemies into the United Front to sabotage it again.

Yuan was infamous, moreover, for his persecution of Sun Yat-sen, which made the comparison between Yuan and Chiang even more unflattering since Chiang claimed to be Sun's heir. The competition for the legacy of Sun Yat-sen was vitally important to Mao and the CCP. The comparison of Chiang Kai-shek to Yuan Shikai was just one of the many aspects of this battle. As early as 1943, Fan Wenlan wrote of Chiang Kai-shek:

This later sage... has great insight, and when the times necessitate, he simply repaints the work of a prior sage.... In 1927 when he betrayed and massacred the CCP, he was but repainting Yuan Shikai's masterpiece of ordering the arrest of Sun Yat-sen and dissolving the Nationalist Party.... He consorts with thieves, hates all progressive people and extolls [the concepts of] one-man leadership, one party [rule] and one-ism [yi ge zhuyi 一个主意], every day [attempting to] suppress the CCP, eliminate the CCP, limit the CCP, dissolve the CCP. All this is but repainting the masterpiece of Yuan, Duan [Qirui] 段祺瑞 (1865-1936)²⁵, and Wu [Peifu]'s 吴佩孚 (1874-1939)²⁶ attacks on Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary forces.²⁷

Not only did Fan equate Yuan and Chiang, but Fan also deliberately equated the persecution of

²⁵ Duan Qirui was a leader within the Beiyang Army and close ally of Yuan Shikai. After Yuan's death, he used his military connections to become Premier (1916-18) and Chief Executive (1924-26) of China.

²⁶ Wu Peifu was a leader of the Beiyang Army under Yuan Shikai. After Yuan's death, he became a military leader in his own right, engaging in political battles without taking office himself.

²⁷ Fan Wenlan, "Yuan Shikai zai ban 袁世凯再版 [Yuan Shikai's Reprint]", *Jiefang ribao* 23 August 1943, 1.

Sun Yat-sen at the hands of Yuan, to the persecution of the CCP and Mao at the hands of Chiang. Fan portrayed the CCP as revolutionary martyrs attacked by reactionary authoritarians to claim the legacy of Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary organisation.

II.C. The CCP as the Successors of the Revolutionary Alliance

In its historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution, the CCP rarely drew direct parallels between the Revolutionary Alliance and itself, instead claiming to learn from the failures of the Revolutionary Alliance. According to the CCP, the Revolutionary Alliance had failed in the 1911 Revolution and went on to become the Nationalist Party, which then repeatedly failed to maintain its revolutionary credentials. Mao's stories of the Chinese Revolution portrayed Mao as redeeming China and the CCP from its failed past,²⁸ so direct comparisons of the CCP to organisations of the past did not fit Mao's master narrative of history. The CCP was therefore more interested in inheriting the beneficial legacies of the Revolutionary Alliance and the 1911 Revolution while discarding the negative inheritance.

In a few articles, however, the CCP directly compared its movement to the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution. These direct comparisons suggested that the CCP had learned from the failures of the Revolutionary Alliance and strengthened the comparison of Mao Zedong to Sun Yat-sen. In one example, Chen Boda specifically invited a comparison of the 1911 Revolution and the Northern Expedition of 1927 to show the effect of the CCP on the revolution:

The first great deed of the CCP was standing at the front of every class and party in China, putting forth the policy of anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism and anti-militarism, creating the national democratic United Front, and because of this there was the first Great Revolution [the Northern Expedition]. Compare this Great Revolution (which

²⁸ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 92-95.

had and was led by the CCP) with the 1911 Revolution (which did not have the CCP and was led by the bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie). The two events were not separated by long in time, yet the revolutions' scope, powers, forms of struggle and the breadth and depth of people's awareness truly make it impossible to mention the two in the same sentence.²⁹

According to Chen, the CCP would ensure the broadness of the United Front since it had done so once already in 1927 before the Nationalist Party betrayed both the CCP and the United Front. Commenting on the military uprisings before the 1911 Revolution, Hu Sheng observed in 1946 that:

One could even say that they were separated from the masses of people and were purely military adventures. In fact, the anti-Manchu Qing and anti-imperialist sentiment of the people at the time was already at an extremely high tide, yet those who planned these military uprisings only trusted military actions, and did not work to connect their uprising and organisation to the masses. Because the goals of the military uprisings and the masses were the same, in the end the people protected [the uprisings]. However, in the context of being completely separate from the people's mass movement, these purely military uprisings could even be said to be meaningless.³⁰

The CCP's analysis of class and use of the United Front here was intended to convey the message that as the leader of the revolutionary movement it would completely trust the

²⁹ Chen Boda, *Guanyu shinian neizhan* 关于十年内战 [On the 10 Years Civil War] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1953), 64. Chen wrote this volume in Yan'an in 1944 during his experience with the Rectification Movement, yet only published the manuscript later, as the book is subtitled, "Yi jiu si si nian chuntian, zai Yan'an canjia xuexi Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi shi de xizuo 一九四四年春天, 在延安参加学习中国共产党历史时的习作 [A Project Written During Participation in the Study of CCP History in Yan'an, Spring 1944]".

³⁰ Hu Sheng, "Xinhai Geming qian zhishifenzi he qunzhong de jiehe 辛亥革命前知识分子和群众的结合 [Pre-1911 Revolution Cooperation between Intellectuals and the Masses]", in Ma, *Hu Sheng wenji*, 377.

masses instead of being a purely military venture. Reliance on the masses was just one of many lessons that the CCP derived from the failure of the Revolutionary Alliance in 1911. The CCP preferred to see itself as inheritor of the Revolutionary Alliance's tradition, rather than a direct continuation of the Alliance itself. Some amount of direct comparison between the CCP and the Revolutionary Alliance, however, was necessary to pair with and reinforce comparisons of the Nationalist Party to the Qing dynasty or comparisons of Chiang Kai-shek to Yuan Shikai.

These direct comparisons of history to the contemporary situation were prominent, but not the most commonly used historical narratives in CCP publications during the Civil War. The application of the themes of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history to these comparative articles shows that historical comparisons were one part of the ideological campaign against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party. Another more prominent and effective component of Mao and the CCP's campaign was discrediting Chiang Kai-shek; both as a bearer of a correct historical narrative of Chinese history, and as the inheritor of Sun Yat-sen's legacy.

III. The Use of the 1911 Revolution in the Ideological Battleground

During the Civil War, there was a clash not only between the opposing military forces of the CCP and Nationalist Party on the battlefield, but ideologically in their master narratives of history as well. Mao Zedong and the CCP challenged Chiang Kai-shek's master narrative of history and his vision for the future whilst also spreading the tenets of Mao's master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought. Already trained by the Rectification Movement to employ Mao Zedong Thought in their writing, CCP writers also aimed to criticise and tear down the foundations of Chiang's ideology.

Historical narratives played a crucial role in the ideological debate between the CCP and the Nationalist Party because both parties relied on historical narratives to prove the validity of

their ideologies and establish their visions for the future of China. Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party created a master narrative of history with a periodisation and understanding radically different from that of Mao and the CCP. Just as Mao had, Chiang based his understanding of the present and his plan for China's future on his own master narrative and propagated it to establish his own authority. To undermine the ideology and plans of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party, the CCP needed to undermine the Nationalist Party's master narrative of history. Whereas Nationalist Party writers could counteract the tactic of making historical analogies with a historical comparison of their own, criticising the foundations of Chiang's master narrative could completely invalidate his ideology and vision for the future of China. The CCP's goal therefore was to convince the Chinese reading public that Chiang's master narrative was not based on a sound understanding or interpretation of the past, thus rendering it invalid. The CCP applied the themes of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative—periodisation through contradictions, class analysis, the unique nature of Chinese society and the United Front—to prove that Chiang's master narrative was flawed and therefore so was his plan for the future of China.

In attacking Chiang's interpretation of history, the CCP presented Mao's narrative as the correct alternative to Chiang's. The goal of invalidating Chiang's narratives, however, forced each of the themes of Mao Zedong Thought to change from their original iteration in Yan'an and thus altered Mao's master narrative. This section identifies and contextualises these changes, the effects of which would only be realised after the foundation of the PRC.

This section will first determine the foundations of Chiang's master narrative of history through a survey of his writings on the 1911 Revolution contained in the monograph, *China's Destiny*. I then analyse the CCP response through its counter-narrative of the 1911 Revolution to determine how the CCP deconstructed Chiang's master narrative. Each of the four aspects of Mao Zedong Thought used in this battle over history adapted to better counter Chiang's master narrative of history.

III.A. Chiang Kai-shek and *China's Destiny*

First, it is useful to summarise Chiang Kai-shek's master narrative to understand and contextualise the nature of the CCP's criticisms. *China's Destiny* [*Zhongguo zhi mingyun* 中国之命运], originally published in 1943, was Chiang's manifesto explaining the nature of China's past, the ongoing sources of conflict in the present and his plan for the future of China. Many CCP writers contributed to the development of Mao's master narrative of history, and many other historians and ideologues aided in the creation and spread of Chiang's master narrative,³¹ therefore it may be unbalanced to look at only one source and one author as the complete guidebook for Chiang's ideology. There are two important reasons, however, why *China's Destiny* is worth considering individually: the first is that *China's Destiny* was not developed and written by Chiang alone and represents his aides as much as it does himself; and the second is that *China's Destiny* was the main target of CCP efforts in this campaign. CCP publications rarely engaged with other works by Nationalist Party ideologues with the same intensity that they criticised Chiang Kai-shek and *China's Destiny*. The personal competition between Chiang and Mao as representatives of their respective parties for the right to rule China, moreover, was more significant to Mao and his goal of obtaining power, than the institutional competition between the Nationalist Party and CCP.³² Specifically attacking the writing and ideology of Chiang Kai-shek not only did more to undermine the Nationalist Party

³¹ Most of the public support for Chiang Kai-shek, his ideology and his cult following emerged from sources not under his direct control, such as voluntary associations and the US media; see Jeremy E. Taylor, "The Production of the Chiang Kai-shek Personality Cult, 1929-1975", *The China Quarterly* 185 (March 2006): 96-110. Unlike Mao, who surrounded himself with intellectuals as aides like Chen Boda, Chiang surrounded himself in military men who did little to contribute to the intellectual battle between the Nationalists and the CCP. For information on some of Chiang's closest associates, see Wen-hsin Yeh, "Dai Li and the Liu Geqing Affair: Heroism in the Chinese Secret Service during the War of Resistance", *Journal of Asian Studies* 48, n. 3 (August 1989): 542-562; Xu Youwei and Philip Billingsly, "Behind the Xi'an Incident: The Case of the Lixingshe", *The China Quarterly* 154 (June 1998): 283-307; and Peter Worthing, "The Road through Whampoa: The Early Career of He Yingqin", *The Journal of Military History* 69, n. 4 (October 2005): 953-985.

³² Mao wrote on Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party constantly in his wartime writings. Chiang, however, never mentioned Mao and rarely even referred to the CCP in *China's Destiny*, making the personal battle between the two leaders rather one-sided. See Charles R. Stevens, "A Content Analysis of the Wartime Writings of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung", *Asian Survey* 4, n. 6 (June 1964): 890-903.

than efforts aimed against the Nationalist Party as a whole, but also played a role in the personal competition between Mao and Chiang.

A reading of *China's Destiny* shows that Chiang based his ideology and his master narrative of history on the unequal treaties signed by the Qing dynasty following the 1840 Opium War. The unequal treaties were both the source of Chiang's periodisation of Chinese history, and, he believed, the origin of the social and moral decline of the Chinese people. Before China could move to the next period in its development, Chiang argued that the Chinese people needed to undergo a revitalisation movement to purge the social and moral decay rampant in society. Until such a time, the Chinese people were not ready for democracy.

Chiang based his periodisation of Chinese history on the introduction and abrogation of the unequal treaties. He argued that prior to the Opium War and the first of the unequal treaties, China had been a powerful and respected country full of people of the highest calibre. Only one mistake separated China from keeping abreast with the development of modern nations in Europe and America:

If the Manchu emperors had not attempted to draw distinctions between Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Mohammedan and Tibetan stocks and, instead, had treated them all on a footing of equality irrespective of religion, occupation, social status and sex, in recognition of the fact that these five stocks are essentially integral parts of one nation; and moreover, if they had assisted the frontier stocks to develop their capacity for self-government and assured them a position of equality, China would surely have kept pace with the European and American nations in attaining strength and prosperity, would not have suffered the humiliation of the restrictions imposed by the unequal treaties during the last hundred years, and would never have permitted Japan

to become the scourge of all Asia.³³

The Qing dynasty failed to recognise the multi-ethnic nature of the Chinese nation and attempted to govern each 'stock' differently. Because of this mistake, society, the arts and sciences in China all stopped progressing, which allowed the West to advance beyond China and subject it to the unequal treaties. While improper racial governance caused China to atrophy, the introduction of the unequal treaties began China's moral degeneration and started a new age in Chinese history.³⁴

The age defined by the unequal treaties was also ending, however, as the unequal treaties had been abolished during the War against Japan. China was finally prepared to complete Chiang's National Revolution:

Had it not been for Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People and the National Revolution which he led, China's national life of five thousand years, like that of Korea, would have been cut short by Japan's policy of piecemeal and wholesale conquests. Fortunately, the far-sighted Father of our Republic, displaying the great courage born of his wisdom and humanitarianism, called upon the people to struggle for their nation's freedom and equality. After carrying on a revolutionary work for forty long years, he succeeded in getting all the people to strive in the right direction for the fulfilment of their aspirations. Finally, just before he breathed his last, he designated the abrogation of the unequal treaties as the first objective of the Chinese National Revolution and enjoined his Party comrades and the people of the whole country to continue the struggle and complete his unfinished task. Now this first objective has

³³ Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny*, trans. Wang Chung-hui (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947), 21.

³⁴ Ibid, 17.

been accomplished; and we are facing the glorious prospect of national renewal.³⁵

Even with the abrogation of the treaties, Chiang notes that national renewal was not yet accomplished, and China had not yet proceeded to the next stage of development. To advance, the Chinese people needed to rid themselves of the ill effects of the unequal treaties. China needed a moral and social revival combatting the perfidious effects of the unequal treaties, which remained even after the elimination of the treaties themselves.

Chiang believed that China's moral and social decay led to China's ongoing humiliation and defeats. The origin of China's moral decay—the unequal treaties—played no role in the continuing humiliation of China. China's moral decay caused China's further military defeats after the Opium War, kept Chinese society from advancing technologically and prevented a truly democratic government from developing. Chiang argued that the unequal treaties set China on a slippery slope of depravity:

During the last hundred years, under the oppression of unequal treaties, the life of the Chinese people became more and more degenerate. Everyone took self-interest as the standard of right and wrong, personal desires as the criterion of good and evil, and considered a thing as right if it conformed to his self-interest or good if it conformed to his personal desires.... In the meantime, extravagant and irresponsible ideologies and political doctrines were freely advanced, either to rationalize self-interest and personal desires or to exploit them for ulterior motives.... The practice of following in the footsteps of the sages, of emulating the heroes and of being 'friends with the ancients' not only tended to disappear, but was even considered mean and despicable. Over and above all this the people became obsessed with everything foreign.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid, 15.

³⁶ Ibid, 72.

The unequal treaties compelled Chinese to turn their backs on traditional Chinese culture and look to foreign ideologies. Because of the importation of foreign ideologies and the denial of Chinese culture, the Chinese people had become degenerate and selfish. This moral degeneracy caused many forms of political failure: Chiang observed that the 1911 Revolution had overthrown the monarchy, but because of the moral decay and corruption that had developed under the unequal treaties, the adoption of a parliamentary system could not succeed.³⁷ According to Chiang, the outward forms of democracy and technology had failed because of the moral corruptness of the Chinese people using them.

China, therefore, needed to reconstruct its society, something Chiang claimed that Sun Yat-sen had recognised and acted upon during his life:

[Sun] was of the opinion that merely to have a president, a parliament, a provisional constitution and a cabinet would not constitute a true democracy. Hence he voluntarily gave up the presidency in favor of Yuan Shih-kai and advocated that members of the Revolutionary Party should play the role of a party not in power and devote their efforts to educational and industrial development, thereby seeking to lay the foundation for the realization of the Three Principles through reformation of the people's ways of thinking and living.³⁸

Chiang reinterpreted Sun's abdication from office in favour of Yuan Shikai as a decision designed to focus on moral rebirth. Chiang sought to legitimise his proposal for a National Revolution to rebuild Chinese society by portraying Sun as having focused on the moral rebirth of China as well. The goal of Chiang's National Revolution was the reformation of the people's ways of thinking and living, to create a moral and social revival. The 1911 Revolution failed because it accomplished only the destructive aspect of the Revolution—removing the Qing

³⁷ Ibid, 47.

³⁸ Ibid, 48.

dynasty—while leaving incomplete the constructive aspect of reforming the people. Now at the end of the War against Japan, Chiang remarked:

Historically speaking, the unequal treaties which were the products of a hundred years of national humiliation, served to arouse the people to a unanimous demand for the removal of this humiliation and the development of our national strength. Herein lies the cause for the Revolution which overthrew the Manchu regime. And herein too is the reason why we have been engaged in the war of resistance and in the work of reconstruction. In the course of this movement, events have demonstrated that the National Revolution is the only way to salvation, a way which is most thorough and most fitting. Up to now, initial successes have been attained. It remains for the Chinese people henceforth to keep to this path so that they may bring to fruition the aims and ideals to which both the war of resistance and the work of reconstruction have been dedicated.³⁹

China's problem was its degeneracy and corruption, and the solution was a reconstruction of the lives and thoughts of its people. After the end of the War against Japan, Chiang planned for a moral regeneration of the Chinese people that would propel China into the next era of its history. Chiang had already attempted a social and moral revival once in the form of the New Life Movement⁴⁰ before the War against Japan interrupted his efforts,⁴¹ and based on the

³⁹ Ibid, 235.

⁴⁰ Chiang Kai-shek and a clique within the Nationalist Party started the New Life Movement (*Xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活运动) in 1934. It compiled a list of rules for daily life aimed at reforming Chinese society and morality to increase nationalism, foster loyalty to the Nationalist Party, combat individualism and reduce vice.

⁴¹ Chiang's goals in the New Life Movement with the reconstruction of the lives of China's people were, in many ways, inspired by fascist movements in Europe in the 1930s. It is unclear whether Chiang endorsed fascism or not as part of his ideology. For more on the New Life Movement and the influence of fascism on Chiang's ideology, see Lloyd E. Eastman, "Fascism in Kuomintang China: The Blue Shirts", *The China Quarterly* 49 (March 1972): 1-31; Maria Hsia Chang, "Fascism and Modern China", *The China Quarterly* 79 (September 1979): 553-567; Lloyd E. Eastman, "Fascism and Modern China: A Rejoinder", *The China Quarterly* 80 (December 1979): 838-842; Frederic Wakeman Jr., "A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism", *The China Quarterly* 150 (June 1997): 395-432; and Fan Hong, "Blue Shirts, Nationalists and Nationalism: Fascism in 1930s China", in *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Global Fascism*, ed. J. A. Mangan (Portland, OR; Frank Cass, 2000), 205-226. These

narrative in *China's Destiny*, Chiang appeared ready to try again. The CCP, however, had other ideas on how to accomplish the task of revitalising China.

III.B. The CCP's Response to *China's Destiny*

Chiang Kai-shek based his master narrative of history, expressed in *China's Destiny*, on a completely different understanding of China's problems compared to that of the CCP and Mao's master narrative. Both the CCP and the Nationalist Party built narratives of history to identify the problems facing contemporary China and predict China's trajectory into the future, but they were completely incompatible with one another. When challenging Chiang and his master narrative of Chinese history, CCP authors thus attempted to both undermine Chiang's master narrative as well as validate Mao's. Party writers accomplished this in their criticism of Chiang and *China's Destiny* by using the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought in their historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution, to offer counter-narratives to Chiang's master narrative of history.

Mao's master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought, however, did not remain entirely static and unchanged after the encounter with *China's Destiny*. Mao Zedong Thought adapted in order to refute Chiang's viewpoints more effectively. During the campaign against Chiang Kai-shek, CCP authors continued to employ the themes of periodisation of history through contradictions and class analysis, in similar ways to their use during the ascent of Mao Zedong Thought within the CCP. The themes of Chinese uniqueness and the United Front, however, changed significantly. Instead of narrating the unique situation of Chinese society created by the contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism, CCP writers defended the need for the global ideology of communism against Chiang's accusations of foreign ideologies weakening China. During the Civil War, CCP writers also changed the inclusive picture of the

works largely cover Chiang and his supporters' ideology during the Nanjing Decade from 1927 to 1937, before the defeat of European fascism. The ideology and publications of Chiang and the Nationalist Party during the Civil War warrants further study.

United Front portrayed in Yan'an to begin identifying parts of the bourgeoisie as enemies rather than friends. Historians limited the friends and expanded the enemies of the United Front, because CCP writers used class analysis to turn Chiang's indictment of the moral decay in Chinese society into an attack on the intrinsic class weaknesses of Chiang Kai-shek and the big bourgeoisie that Chiang represented. Mao and the CCP began to narrow their definition of friend and constricted the scope of the class alliance suggested by the United Front to serve Mao's goal of discrediting Chiang Kai-shek and undermining his authority. The trend to constrict the classes allowed into Mao's United Front, while expanding the number of enemies, would continue unabated throughout the history of Mao's control over the CCP and China.

III.B.1. The Source of the Periodisation of History

Both Mao and Chiang argued that the 1840 Opium War began the period of modern Chinese history, but identified very different reasons for initiating the periodisation of history with that event. Chiang identified the unequal treaties—of which the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing after the Opium War was the first—and the resultant moral decline as the defining characteristic of modern Chinese history and the basis of its periodisation. Mao and the CCP, on the other hand, defined modern Chinese history according to the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation. Because both Chiang and Mao periodised Chinese history according to such different analyses, their views on the nature of Chinese society were also fundamentally different. Chen Boda's rebuttal of *China's Destiny* mocked Chiang's periodisation and its view of China before the unequal treaties, remarking, "The author of *China's Destiny* wrote of these things [the faults of traditional society, namely the oppression of the peasantry] as a 'Golden Age' Strangely, with things going so swimmingly, why could they not defeat foreign invaders, and often made pacts with those enemies, signing so many unequal treaties? This is just one of the book's internal contradictions".⁴² Chen challenged Chiang to provide a cause

⁴² Chen Boda, *Ping 'Zhongguo zhi mingyun'* 评'中国之命运' [A Critique of 'China's Destiny'] (Shanghai:

for the signing of the unequal treaties. Periodising modern Chinese history according to the signing of unequal treaties switched cause and the effect, according to CCP writers; Chiang ignored the cause of imperialism and instead looked only at the effects of imperialism in the unequal treaties. The CCP argued that the contradiction between China and imperialism was the cause of the periodisation of history and that the unequal treaties were the effects. In 1948, Hua Gang 华岗 (1903-1972)⁴³, for example, wrote:

*The 1911 Revolution did not recognise the task of anti-imperialism. We know that the Revive China Society⁴⁴ and the Revolutionary Alliance's policies, while recognising the cruel situation created by the great powers, the danger facing the country, the struggle for national survival, the great cries of pain, did not, however, put forth a clear, concrete view on anti-imperialism, nor did they take up the responsibility to struggle against imperialism. Obviously, the leaders of the Revive China Society and Revolutionary Alliance had only seen the domestic rule of the Tartar barbarians, and thought that if they toppled the Manchu Qing barbarian rule, established a republic and implemented democracy, only then could the nation strengthen itself. This sort of narrow national revolution theory, if perhaps it had occurred before there were imperialist fetters, then maybe it could have worked. However, *from the moment imperialism invaded China, the Chinese democratic revolution first needed to carry out victoriously an anti-imperialist national independence liberation, and only then would the revolution be completed.*⁴⁵*

Hua followed Mao's periodisation of history to argue that China's contradiction with

Xinhua shudian, 1949), 16.

⁴³ Hua Gang was an early member of the CCP who fell from favour during a 1955 purge and was jailed thereafter. He died in custody but was posthumously rehabilitated in 1980.

⁴⁴ The Revive China Society (*Xing Zhong hui* 兴中会) was revolutionary group founded in 1894 by Sun Yat-sen, which merged into the Revolutionary Alliance together with many other groups in 1905.

⁴⁵ Hua Gang, *Zhongguo minzu jiefang yundong shi* 中国民族解放运动史 [A History of the Chinese National Liberation Movement], v. 1 (Shanghai: Du shu chubanshe, 1948), 223-224. Emphasis in the original.

imperialism, rather than the unequal treaties which imperialist powers forced China to sign, was the motivating force behind the periodisation of China's history. The CCP argued that Chiang's failure to distinguish between cause and effect invalidated his master narrative of history and therefore invalidated Chiang's plan for the future of China.

III.B.2. Class Analysis and Class Interests

CCP historians and journalists fundamentally disagreed with Chiang's argument that moral decay caused China's political problems. Where Chiang Kai-shek saw a social problem of rampant individualism harming the nation, CCP writers saw a contradiction between classes based on different class interests. CCP writers agreed that the basic contradiction which defined Chinese history—the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation—expressed itself as a battle between the revolutionary classes against domestic reactionary classes aligned with imperialism. Reactionaries allied with imperialism to protect their class interests. Hua Gang explained in his monograph that:

Imperialism and the feudal Manchu Qing government wanted to maintain the status quo and protect the old relations of production, so they obstructed the development of Chinese national capitalism. The workers, Chinese bourgeoisie living abroad, awakened intellectuals and a portion of new bureaucrats, peasants and handicraft workers wanted to break down the status quo. [They wanted to] break down the barriers inhibiting the progress of the productive forces, wanted to also topple the Manchu Qing's feudal rule, as well as the imperialists' rule in China and thus open up the path to China's independent capitalist development. The development of this contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production resulted in the 1911 revolution.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid, 199.

Both the imperialist powers and the Qing dynasty attempted to protect their interests through the alliance made between the two. According to the class analysis employed by Hua, the Qing dynasty benefited from imperialist exploitation of China. Moreover, the interests of the ruling class allied with imperialism—from the classes represented by the Qing dynasty to those represented by Yuan Shikai and Chiang Kai-shek—conflicted with the interests of the masses. Chen Boda wrote, “A couple of million soldiers, police, bureaucrats and gentry and the organs of the military bureaucracy were Yuan Shikai’s political force, and the base of his Yuan Shikai’s political power. The interests of these blood-sucking parasites of over 400,000,000 people were completely incompatible with the interests of the masses”.⁴⁷ A tiny parasitic ruling class like Yuan’s military or the Qing dynasty depended on imperialism to continue its rule because the ruling classes’ interests harmed the masses, causing the masses to oppose the ruling classes. Chen and other CCP authors argued that reactionary ruling classes turned to imperialism to strengthen their position at the cost of giving imperialist powers the right to exploit China. According to Mao’s master narrative of history, the motivating force behind the Chinese revolution originated from a conflict of class interests. Imperialist powers and their allies from various reactionary classes within China defended their class interests against the revolutionary movement of the exploited masses. CCP writers argued that the interests of the ruling classes—rather than the moral degeneracy of the Chinese people—resulted in the failure of both the 1911 Revolution and China’s economic development. Identifying class interests as the source of China’s failed revolutionary movements undermined Chiang’s narrative of moral decay and therefore his solution for China’s problems.

III.B.3. Foreign Ideology and Chinese Uniqueness

Chiang Kai-shek identified the importation of foreign ideologies as one of the main reasons for the moral decay of China. According to Chiang, the unequal treaties had opened China to foreign ideologies and many Chinese flocked to these ideologies because they justified a self-

⁴⁷ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qieguo dadao Yuan Shikai*, 59.

serving attitude. Chiang aimed this narrative of foreign ideology corrupting China directly at the CCP. The CCP, as bearer of a foreign ideology, needed to defend the Party from this accusation. In defending its Marxist ideology from Chiang's accusations, however, the CCP argued for the global application of communism and rewrote the theme of Chinese uniqueness in Mao Zedong Thought. In his response to *China's Destiny*, Chen Boda pointed out the contributions that foreign ideology had already made to China's revolution:

Mr. Yat-sen groped about for many years but never found the way [to establish a loyal, revolutionary army], but as soon as he united with the CCP and united with the USSR, within the space of a few years [he] had such great military victories. The reason Nationalist Party forces took Wuhan and Nanjing [during the Northern Expedition], the reason things are as they are today—whose contribution was that? Everybody should seriously ask themselves, why was this not the history written [in *China's Destiny*]?⁴⁸

Chen attributed the success of the Nationalist Party's armies—both in the Northern Expedition and during the War against Japan—to the Nationalist Party's alliance with the CCP and USSR. Chen went on to describe how a separate foreign ideology had informed Sun at an earlier time, writing:

Democratic ideology entered our country and inspired our citizens to open their eyes to the world, to rise in struggle and topple authoritarian institutions, and Mr. Yat-sen was once this sort of warrior. According to the author [of *China's Destiny*, Chiang Kai-shek], this was all in vain, because China from old had a 'rule of law'. Is this to say that if there had been no unequal treaties, everything old in China's government would have been absolutely perfect? This sort of opinion not only turns its back on Mr. Sun

⁴⁸ Chen Boda, *Ping 'Zhongguo zhi mingyun'*, 33.

Yat-sen's democratic ideology but also violates the hopes of today's Chinese people.⁴⁹

Not only was communism a helpful addition to the progress of the Chinese revolution, but the democratic ideology originally espoused by Sun Yat-sen had been a foreign import as well.

Chen used the figure of the Sun Yat-sen to show the necessity for, and application of, foreign ideologies to China. Mao Zedong also wrote:

As for the old Tridemism, this was a product of the old era of the Chinese Revolution....

In 1914 before the Nationalist Party reorganised Tridemism, it was still the old category of Tridemism, it was still the Tridemism of the past and if it had not been developed into New Tridemism the Nationalist Party simply would not have advanced. The intelligent Sun Yat-sen saw this, and obtained the help of Lenin and the CCP, renewed the interpretation of Tridemism and imparted it with new historical characteristics, creating a Tridemism of a United Front with communism, creating the first Nationalist Party-CCP United Front, and earning the sympathy of the people of the whole country, and starting the first great revolution.⁵⁰

Chen, Mao and other CCP writers argued that Chiang's claim that foreign ideologies had brought nothing but decay to China was in fact a betrayal of Sun Yat-sen. In these examples the CCP argued that Sun borrowed from foreign ideologies including democracy to create Tridemism, and communism to create New Tridemism; foreign ideologies without which the accomplishments already made during the revolution would have been impossible. Portraying Sun as receptive to communism not only countered Chiang's attack on the CCP for bearing a corrupting foreign ideology, it redefined the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, a topic I return to in more

⁴⁹ Ibid, 53.

⁵⁰ Mao Zedong, "Jiu Sanminzhuyi yu Xin Sanminzhuyi 旧三民主义与新三民主义 [Old Tridemism and New Tridemism]", in *Sanminzhuyi yu Gongchanzhuyi 三民主义与共产主义 [Tridemism and Communism]*, eds. Luo Fu 洛甫 and Chen Boda (Hong Kong: Xianshi chubanshe, 1948), 25-26.

detail later in this chapter.

In fact, the CCP turned the argument around entirely and argued that the failures of the Chinese revolution were due to a lack of foreign ideology. When he was consolidating his power over the CCP, Mao argued for the need for a uniquely Chinese theory for the Chinese revolution. During the campaign against Chiang Kai-shek, however, CCP writers argued that China did not understand foreign ideologies well enough during the 1911 Revolution. Li Naihan 李乃涵 (d.u.) wrote that the revolutionaries' traditional culture had left "skeletons in their ideological closets" that diluted the importation of democratic ideology in 1911, dooming the 1911 Revolution to accomplish only the narrow, racist goal of ending the Qing dynasty.⁵¹ The failure to abandon fully the feudal ideology of Confucianism led to the failure of the 1911 Revolution, according to Li. The foreign ideology of democracy, however incomplete its adoption was at the time of the 1911 Revolution, was the source of the successes of the 1911 Revolution. Some CCP writers no longer portrayed Chinese society as unique and therefore requiring a unique theory to lead it, as had Mao prior to the Civil War. Instead, these CCP writers portrayed China as a country that needed a globally applicable outside theory to bring the revolution to a victorious conclusion. The view of Chinese society as requiring a unique theory in Mao Zedong Thought began to change due to its encounter with Chiang's narrative of history. Not all CCP historians agreed on the issue, and in this instance Mao benefited from both the interpretations of Chinese society as unique and as the recipient of the global ideology of Marxism. After the foundation of the PRC, Mao reassessed which narrative of Chinese uniqueness suited his goals and Mao's shifting goals led CCP historians to reassess the place of the Chinese revolution in the world revolution.

⁵¹ Li Naihan, *Xinhai Geming yu Yuan Shikai* 辛亥革命与袁世凯 [*The 1911 Revolution and Yuan Shikai*] (Beijing: San lian shudian, 1950), 10-11.

III.B.4. Moral Decay and the Bourgeoisie in the United Front

The theme of the United Front also began to change due to its encounter with Chiang Kai-shek and *China's Destiny*. CCP ideologues argued that the number of friends of the revolution diminished, while the number of enemies expanded during the Civil War. Mao and the CCP undermined Chiang Kai-shek's narrative of the moral depravity of Chinese society, not by attacking the entire narrative, but by arguing that moral decay was a manifestation of class interests. Chiang argued that introduction of unequal treaties brought foreign ideologies into China that made the Chinese people self-serving and disconnected from the traditions of their ancient culture. The CCP argued that any of the outward symptoms Chiang identified as moral decay—such as self-serving behaviour and the failure of parliamentary government—were manifestations of classes acting to protect their class interests. Moreover, CCP writers began arguing that parts of the bourgeoisie—specifically the big bourgeoisie and compradors that received imperialist support—no longer had a place in the United Front because of their class interests. The CCP not only added the big bourgeoisie to the enemies of the United Front, but it also argued that leadership of the United Front would not be shared. This helped justify Mao and the CCP's attacks on the Nationalist Party and secure the CCP's control over China. The CCP portrayed Chiang Kai-shek as the representative of the big bourgeoisie and compradors, in addition to being representative of the alliance between imperialism and feudal forces within China.

The manifestation of the class interests of the bourgeoisie appeared in several diverse ways. First was the inability of the bourgeoisie to put its ideals and ideologies into practice. Although the bourgeoisie did have a revolutionary ideology, the class interests of the bourgeoisie limited its application. Yang Kanghua 杨康华 (1915-1991)⁵² wrote:

⁵² Yang Kanghua joined the CCP in 1936 and worked behind enemy lines in Hong Kong and South China during the War against Japan. After 1949, he served in many roles in education, propaganda and the United Front Department in his home province of Guangdong.

The spirit of Tridemism first appeared in the 1905 founding proclamation of the Revolutionary Alliance, which put forth four slogans: '1) Expel the tartars, 2) Restore China, 3) Found a Republic, 4) Equal Land Rights'. At that time, however, many [of the slogans] were not yet concrete [in practice]. First, because nationalism was most evidently and importantly focused on toppling the Manchu Qing dynasty and its oppression of the Han people, [the Revolutionary Alliance] still had only muddled knowledge of anti-imperialism.⁵³

The ideology of Tridemism might have been enough in another age, but the changed nature of the world due to imperialism's influence made that ideology incomplete and unable to bring the revolution to a successful conclusion. The bourgeoisie could not practice its ideology because that ideology no longer suited the Chinese or world revolutions during the era of imperialism. Li Naihan wrote:

Imperialism's policy in China at the core was to ensure the interests it had obtained [such as railroads, mines and control over tariffs]. To ensure its interests, it needed to support China's semi-colonial condition at that time. The revolution sought to break down and change that condition. If the revolution had succeeded, then China's national capitalism would have developed by leaps and bounds, and China's national independence movement would have also reached a high tide, which would infringe on imperialism's interests. Therefore, imperialism completely opposed China's revolution and helped the Manchu Qing government to suppress the revolution.⁵⁴

Li's argument accorded with Mao's in that each described imperialists as aligned with domestic forces to suppress the Chinese revolution. Chen Boda extended the argument and claimed that parts of the bourgeoisie—the compradors and the big bourgeoisie—were enemies of the

⁵³ Yang Kanghua, "Sanminzhuyi yanjiu tigang 三民主义研究提纲 [Research Notes on Tridemism]", in Luo and Chen, *Sanminzhuyi yu Gongchanzhuyi*, 80.

⁵⁴ Li Naihan, *Xinhai Geming yu Yuan Shikai*, 51.

revolution: “After experiencing the revolutionary movement, the imperialists, large landlords and compradors all needed Yuan Shikai to represent them, to collect power to stabilise the order of their rule. The big bourgeoisie affiliated with the large factories also hoped they could use him to establish a stable order”.⁵⁵ Sections of the bourgeoisie joined the ranks of the reactionaries to ally with imperialism and oppose the revolution to protect its class interests. While during the War against Japan opposition to Japan qualified a class to participate in the United Front, after the end of the war, classes needed to renounce all ties with imperialism to join the United Front. The big bourgeoisie no longer had a place in the United Front due to its reliance on imperialism.

Moreover, the Chinese revolution needed the leadership of the proletariat to achieve a successful revolution and establish a democratic China. The bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution in whole or in part, because its class interests conflicted with those of the masses. Rather than a class alliance “led in whole or in part by the proletariat”,⁵⁶ as portrayed by Mao during the War against Japan, during the Civil War the United Front meant a class alliance led by the proletariat. Hu Sheng wrote: “Advanced intellectuals and their work among the masses propagandising, teaching, and organising also had a significant effect.... If one does not point out the fact that contemporary intellectuals did unite with the masses, then the history of the 1911 Revolution would be incomplete”.⁵⁷ The successes of the 1911 Revolution stemmed from the unity of the bourgeoisie and the masses: the end of that unity led to the eventual failure of the 1911 Revolution. The ideology that the Chinese revolution required, which the 1911 Revolutionaries had not fully recognised, was one of reliance on the masses. Some CCP writers claimed that the entire bourgeoisie was incapable of ever truly uniting with and relying on the masses, not just the compradors and big bourgeoisie. Li Naihan wrote, “The Revolutionary Alliance’s leadership was not strong or forceful enough to lead a truly

⁵⁵ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qieguo dadao Yuan Shikai*, 16.

⁵⁶ Mao Zedong, “Xin Minzhuzhuyi lun”, 154.

⁵⁷ Hu Sheng, “Xinhai Geming qian zhishifenzi he qunzhong de jiehe”, 378.

democratic revolution. Although the bourgeoisie was newly awakened, it was still completely weak and incapable. Every group and every class united to oppose the Manchus, but within the ideology and actions [of the bourgeoisie], there was also the likelihood of conciliation during the revolution. This bourgeois leadership determined, from the very start, the fate of the revolution".⁵⁸ Li argued that the participation of the bourgeoisie in the United Front endangered the revolution since the bourgeoisie could conciliate with imperialism and betray the United Front at any time. This was the counter-narrative to Chiang's narrative of moral decay: the CCP instead wrote a narrative of the intrinsic class weakness of the bourgeoisie. The CCP argued that the class interests of reactionaries, which included the big bourgeoisie, led to the moral decay that Chiang identified as the source of China's problems. This link between moral decay and reactionaries undermined Chiang's master narrative of history by linking Chiang's alliance to reactionaries and imperialism to the very moral decay he deplored. Moreover, the intrinsic weakness of the bourgeoisie meant that the class was not necessarily a friend of the revolution or invited to join the United Front. Only the proletariat as represented by the CCP could lead the United Front.

The competition between the master narratives of the Nationalist Party and the CCP was a key component of the CCP's campaign against Chiang Kai-shek. The CCP's ideological unification under Mao Zedong Thought brought about by the 1942 Rectification Movement, enhanced the ability of the CCP to wage the ideological battle against the Nationalist Party during the Civil War. CCP writers all applied the themes of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history to attack Chiang Kai-shek's ideology. Mao Zedong Thought, however, changed due to the encounter with Chiang's master narrative, as Mao and other CCP historians reinterpreted the themes of Mao Zedong Thought to better counteract Chiang's arguments. Most importantly, through an application of class analysis the CCP identified sections of the bourgeoisie as enemies of the United Front and the Chinese revolution rather than friends as

⁵⁸ Li Naihan, *Xinhai Geming yu Yuan Shikai*, 2.

in the War against Japan. The narrowing of the category of friends and the expansion of enemies of the revolution continued throughout the history of the PRC and led to many of the later debates about Mao's master narrative of history. The expansion of the list of enemies also led to many of the purges—both of historians and politicians—that marked the history of the CCP and PRC after the Civil War.

IV. The Use of the 1911 Revolution as a Legacy

The most important struggle in the narration of history between the CCP and the Nationalist Party during the Civil War, was over the legacies of the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen. Mao's overarching target for the entire publication campaign was to discredit Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party, while also establishing Mao's claim to lead China. Although the CCP employed historical narratives in many ways during this campaign, the struggle over the legacies of the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen was decisive. The CCP and the Nationalist Party collaborated to establish Sun Yat-sen as the legitimate leader of China; inheriting his mantle meant inheriting the leadership of China.⁵⁹ The CCP had already earned significant legitimacy within China for its economic and social reforms in the base areas,⁶⁰ and the perception of its greater effort and effectiveness in the War against Japan in comparison to the Nationalist Party brought it legitimacy across the country.⁶¹ The Nationalist Party also worked against itself by allowing open US military interference in China⁶² and violently suppressing dissent in the presses and college campuses.⁶³ The economy of China, moreover, was in shambles and most blamed the mismanagement of the Nationalist Party for the problems.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 33; Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, 408-414.

⁶⁰ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 207.

⁶¹ Feng Chongyi and David S. G. Goodman, "Introduction", in Feng and Goodman, *North China at War*, 3.

⁶² Hinton, *Fanshen*, 98.

⁶³ Pepper, "The Student Movement and the Chinese Civil War".

⁶⁴ The Nationalist government severely mismanaged its tax system, overspent its budget, failed to control the exponential inflation and its policies meant to address these issues harmed all sectors of Chinese society but affected the poor and middle-class particularly acutely; Chang Kia-ngau, *The Inflationary Spiral: The Experience in China, 1939-1950* (New York: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1958), 153-169, 259-274, 306-326, 350-367. While the Nationalists' policies even alienated big business and industry leaders, at the same time the Nationalists

Sun Yat-sen's mantle was among the few sources justifications claimed by Chiang for his power. Arguing that the CCP and Mao were the true successors to Sun threatened to take this last support away from Chiang and therefore politically isolate the Nationalist Party. The CCP was campaigning for the loyalty of minor parties and other wavering populations by taking up Sun's legacy and specifically the legacy of Tridemism. At the very least, the CCP hoped to neutralise the intellectuals supporting the Nationalist Party⁶⁵ and they did so through the campaign against Chiang Kai-shek.

The CCP used the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history to create narratives of the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen that strengthened Mao's claim to the leadership of China. CCP writers portrayed the legacies of the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen as part of a revolutionary tradition leading inevitably to Mao. The CCP argued that the Party had inherited the lessons and legacies of the Chinese Revolution by defining the legacy of the 1911 Revolution as reliance on the masses, and portraying Sun Yat-sen as a theorist of the Chinese Revolution. Mao's United Front played a key role in linking Mao to Sun, as the CCP argued that Sun Yat-sen invented the United Front and that Mao perfected it. The United Front of the Civil War, however, expanded its list of enemies to include Chiang and the big bourgeoisie. The changes made to the categories of friends and enemies during the Civil War led to a drastic shift within Mao Zedong Thought that CCP historians would attempt to reconcile after the foundation of the PRC.

IV.A. Inheriting the Legacy of the 1911 Revolution

The legacies of the 1911 Revolution and Sun Yat-sen, as defined by CCP writers during the Civil War, shared many similar traits. The legacy of the 1911 Revolution was also intertwined with

were seen as helping only those industries owned by government officials or their associates; Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 118-131. After 1949, while the CCP lacked clear support from urban populations, the Nationalists had so ruined their image in the cities through mismanagement and corruption that many were hopeful for any change the CCP might bring; Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 77-79.

⁶⁵ Groot, *Managing Transitions*, 23.

that of Sun Yat-sen because Sun led the 1911 Revolution. One message that particularly stood out in the legacy of the 1911 Revolution was the idea of unity with the masses. CCP writers all admitted that the unity of the revolutionaries with the masses during the 1911 Revolution was incomplete, but that the failure of the 1911 Revolution had taught China the necessity of complete unification with the masses. All the 1911 Revolution's successes were due to the initial unity between the masses and the revolutionaries; conversely, all later failures were due to the revolutionaries' failure to rely on the masses. This narrative developed from the themes of class analysis and the United Front in Mao Zedong Thought. For example, Chen Boda wrote:

The [1911] Revolution mainly relied on a voluntary party structure of peasant masses, which achieved some certain victories, but the bourgeoisie did not and could not possibly agree to incite the peasant masses completely. It could only incite the peasant masses to a limited degree and within certain patterns, and was prepared to end the movement at any time, so the revolution could not work out to be truly in the peasants' favour. The bourgeoisie's weakness, incapability and conciliatoriness was really revealed in the 1911 Revolution's weak answer to the peasant problem. This made the revolution abortive halfway through... and allowed the Beiyang military rulers like Yuan Shikai to take power.⁶⁶

Chen argued that the bourgeoisie did not have the peasants' class interests in mind and therefore could not truly create a United Front with them. While the two classes worked together in a United Front during the times that their interests coincided—such as overthrowing the Qing dynasty—once the alliance had accomplished that task, the two classes no longer shared any interests. Therefore, only a class that shared interests with the peasants could solve the problems of the peasantry: the proletariat and their representatives in the CCP. Hu Sheng argued that modern Chinese history proved the need for establishing true unity with

⁶⁶ Chen Boda, *Renmin gongdi Jiang Jieshi*, 7-8.

the masses:

The degree of the breadth and intimacy with which the intellectuals and masses unite is the deciding factor in the degree to which the revolution heats up. The mass movements prior to the 1911 Revolution had these sorts of defects [a lack of intimacy between intellectuals and the masses], which affected how fragile the results of the 1911 Revolution were. However, if the revolutionary intellectuals did not establish any degree of unity with the masses, then the successes of the 1911 Revolution would be unimaginable.⁶⁷

A limited unity between the intellectuals and the masses produced a few results, such as the 1911 Revolution's overthrow of the Qing dynasty. The CCP argued that a greater unity could have accomplished even more, and thus Mao's United Front with total unity between the intellectuals and the masses could complete the goals of the 1911 Revolution, and rebuild the nation. Even military strength paled in comparison to unity with the masses, as one editorial claimed:

No matter that the Manchu Qing court's rule was described as 'established on an awesome scale with severely written codes' by Chiang Kai-shek in *China's Destiny*, at the time the armed forces standing on the side of the people had but to try and the Qing would come tumbling down. Even Yuan Shikai's forces could not save the Manchu Qing from their elimination. The history of the 1911 Revolution proves that rulers who oppose the people and oppose the revolution can struggle to delay their fate for a time, but that the outcome of any struggle rests on the side of the people, whose armed forces (no matter if they appear to be too few) will always defeat the

⁶⁷ Hu Sheng, "Xinhai Geming qian zhishifenzi he qunzhong de jiehe", 386.

armed forces of the counterrevolution.⁶⁸

The lesson of the 1911 Revolution was that any revolution engaging in a United Front with the people based on shared class interests had access to a greater force than any reactionary military force. The 1911 Revolution also provided an example of a failure when the Revolutionary Alliance negotiated with and gave power to Yuan Shikai rather than unite with the masses and carry out the revolution completely. The lesson of completely relying upon and unifying with the masses was the major lesson the CCP took from the 1911 Revolution. According to the CCP, the person behind the 1911 Revolution's initial unity with the masses was Sun Yat-sen, so creating a United Front with the masses was both a legacy of the 1911 Revolution and of Sun Yat-sen.

IV.B. Inheriting the Legacy of Sun Yat-sen

Inheriting the mantle of Sun Yat-sen was among the most important themes of CCP historical narratives prior to and during the Civil War. In fact, the battle for Sun's legacy had begun during the War against Japan, as the CCP challenged the Nationalist Party for the right to Sun's legacy through a competition of self-sacrifice during the war.⁶⁹ This battle stretched far beyond the war and the actual battle lines and into the realm of historical narratives, where CCP claims to have inherited the legacy of Sun were among the most common themes in all its publications. The CCP used historical narratives of Sun Yat-sen to argue that Chiang Kai-shek had abandoned the heritage of Sun, thus discrediting Chiang and politically isolating the Nationalist Party. The CCP also narrated the history of Sun Yat-sen to define Sun's legacy in such a way that the CCP and Mao became the clear inheritors of Sun's legacy.

The CCP claimed Sun's legacy based on three major arguments: that Sun's true legacy was one of revolutionary innovation, that Chiang Kai-shek had betrayed this legacy due to his class

⁶⁸ "Zhongguo jundui de liang tiao daolu", 1.

⁶⁹ Selden, *China in Revolution*, 102.

interests and that Sun himself had been a proto-communist theorist of the Chinese revolution. Mao's master narrative of history and particularly the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought in his narrative of the 1911 Revolution played a key role in each of these three arguments. The CCP's narratives defined and then claimed to inherit the legacy of Sun Yat-sen to justify the CCP and Mao's claim to the leadership of China.

IV.B.1. Sun as a Revolutionary Innovator

Unlike the Nationalist Party and Chiang Kai-shek, The CCP could neither claim to be the party founded by Sun Yat-sen, nor could it claim to be his brother-in-law, anointed successor or any other close relationship. Nevertheless, Mao and the CCP used Mao's master narrative of history to portray the CCP, Mao Zedong Thought and Mao himself as the logical successors of the Revolutionary Alliance, Tridemism and Sun Yat-sen.⁷⁰ In order to claim Sun's legacy, the CCP first needed to define that legacy. CCP writers did so by transforming the legacy of Sun Yat-sen into a legacy of revolutionary innovation. Accordingly, the CCP defined Sun Yat-sen not by his ideas or writings, but by the fact that Sun's personal ideology constantly adapted to fit the evolving revolutionary circumstances. Chen Boda wrote:

[Due to] the course of Sun Yat-sen's long-term experience of many defeats, setbacks and his mistake in conciliation [to Yuan Shikai after the 1911 Revolution], he found a new road to revolution that determined his three great policies of uniting with the USSR, with the CCP and aiding the proletariat and the peasantry. Because of this, he reorganised the Nationalist Party, formed the first Nationalist Party-CCP cooperation, and re-explained Tridemism, taking it from old democracy to New Democracy.... On the question of Nationalist Party-CCP cooperation, Sun Yat-sen ran into obstruction and defamation from imperialism and reactionaries, which demonstrates [his] heroic

⁷⁰ Boorman, "Mao Tse-tung as a Historian", 307.

spirit of fearlessness in the great revolution.⁷¹

It was through his mistakes and experience that Sun learned to be more progressive and pioneer new methods of revolution. While he began his career as a revolutionary in the mould of the old democratic bourgeois revolution, Sun learned through experience that imperialism was the source of China's problems. Sun also learned from experience, moreover, never to appease reactionaries. Yang Kanghua argued that Sun was the first to articulate and understand the three problems that defined the Chinese revolution: independence, rights and people's livelihood. Sun recognised the problems faced by China, but it was only during revolutionary practice that he recognised that imperialism was the source of China's problems and developed the methods necessary to solve those problems.⁷² Revolutionary experience taught Sun that the revolution needed to continue to progress ideologically if it were to achieve success. The CCP argued that Sun innovated new revolutionary methods to meet the contemporary circumstances of the revolution, just as Mao and the CCP argued that Mao invented the theory of the New Democratic Revolution. The CCP linked Mao and Sun by their shared innovation of a uniquely Chinese theory, providing historical validation for both Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's leadership. Moreover, the narrative of Sun's innovation through experience showed that Sun himself abandoned obsolete ideologies in favour of ones that worked, and suggested that Sun would have continued to advance ideologically rather than remain tied to the past. The CCP suggested, as I cover later, that Sun might have even become a communist due to this ability to innovate and advance through revolutionary experience. The CCP then depicted Mao's adversary—Chiang Kai-shek—as embodying the exact opposite of revolutionary innovation and ideological progress, thus betraying Sun's real legacy. Once the CCP had established that the defining characteristic of Sun's life was his commitment to revolutionary innovation, they could turn that definition against Chiang Kai-shek for not

⁷¹ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qieguo dadao Yuan Shikai*, 77.

⁷² Yang Kanghua, "Sanminzhuyi yanjiu tigang", 79.

displaying a similar spirit.

IV.B.2. Chiang as Betraying Sun

While Sun Yat-sen showed that people could exceed class boundaries and remake themselves, Chiang Kai-shek demonstrated that some people were incapable of working against their class interests. Mao built his master narrative of history—and the United Front’s place in it—to argue that people could transform themselves through ideology;⁷³ the campaign against Chiang Kai-shek marked a change in Mao’s narrative in that sections of the bourgeoisie could no longer join the United Front and that the proletariat could not share leadership of the United Front. The CCP argued that Chiang not only failed to continue to develop Sun Yat-sen’s Tridemism, he in fact betrayed it by imbuing it with his own reactionary ideology. The key factor in determining Chiang’s failure to have carried on Sun’s legacy was his reactionary regression of Tridemism. Zhang Wentian 张闻天 (1900-1976)⁷⁴ wrote:

There are two kinds of stances on Tridemism. The first stance is one of diligently protecting and developing Tridemism’s basic revolutionary spirit, making it become a guiding political principle for the nation’s grasping of total revolutionary victory in this struggle [against Japan]. The other stance is to cripple and hide Tridemism’s basic revolutionary spirit, to protect and develop the negative and conservative factors within Tridemism, and make it become a guiding political policy of incomplete, vacillating or biased Unidemism.⁷⁵

Chiang betrayed the legacy of Sun Yat-sen by representing counterrevolutionaries and

⁷³ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao’s Republic*, 12.

⁷⁴ Zhang Wentian, also known as Luo Fu 洛甫, was a member of the CCP who had studied in Moscow but switched alliances to Mao, serving in various foreign policy posts in the PRC before losing power in 1959.

⁷⁵ Luo Fu, “Yonghu zhen Sanminzhuyi fandui jia Sanminzhuyi 拥护真三民主义反对假三民主义 [Defend Real Tridemism, Oppose Fake Tridemism]”, in Luo and Chen, *Sanminzhuyi yu Gongchanzhuyi*, 3. The author created the word Unidemism (*Yi min zhuyi* 一民主义) to satirise Chiang for believing in only one of Sun Yat-sen’s three principles of Tridemism—Nationalism—rather than all three.

corrupting the revolution's guiding ideology. Wu Yuzhang wrote that Chiang, "Has completely betrayed and sold out the Republic of China created by the 1911 Revolution, which is a million times worse than the nefarious actions of the Manchu Qing. Yet the traitor Chiang Kai-shek speaks of 'the President [Sun Yat-sen]' yet shuts up about 'Tridemism', and speaks of 'revolution' as if it were something to be feared, and in all his actions and thoughts has completely abandoned the President, dishonouring Tridemism and corrupting the revolution".⁷⁶ While supporting Sun's legacy in name, Chiang worked against it in every way by clinging to his own reactionary ideology.

Chiang's reactionary ideology and perversion of Sun Yat-sen's Tridemism, moreover, was entirely class-based according to the CCP. Wang Jiaxiang 王稼祥 (1906-1974)⁷⁷ analysed Chiang's ideology in terms of class, arguing:

To protect Sun Yat-sen's Tridemism, one must oppose the bourgeois reformation of Tridemism. This sort of reform truly abandons Mr. Sun's revolutionary spirit, and seeks to turn Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary Tridemism into an anti-communist reactionary theory. Not opposing this sort of reform of Tridemism will impede revitalising Sun Yat-sen's real revolutionary spirit, consolidating the United Front and bringing the great nation to its victorious liberation.⁷⁸

According to Wang, and many other authors quoted throughout this chapter, the big bourgeoisie as a class was unsuited to complete the revolution against imperialism. CCP writers portrayed Chiang as the representative of the big bourgeoisie that had allied with imperialism, in order to argue that Chiang could not work against his own class interests to

⁷⁶ Wu Yuzhang, "Yao dadao Zhongshan xiansheng de pantu Jiang Jieshi 要打到中山先生的叛徒蒋介石 [Bring Down the Traitor to Mr. Sun, Chiang Kai-shek]", in *Jin Cha Ji ribao* 晋察冀日报 [*The Jin Cha Ji Border Region Daily*] 12 October 1947, 1.

⁷⁷ Wang Jiaxiang was a Moscow trained CCP member who switched alliances to join Mao and held important foreign policy positions in the PRC until his purge and death in the Cultural Revolution.

⁷⁸ Wang Jiaxiang, "Guanyu Sanminzhuyi yu Gongchanzhuyi 关于三民主义与共产主义 [On Tridemism and Communism]", in Luo and Chen, *Sanminzhuyi yu Gongchanzhuyi*, 20.

develop Tridemism and lead the revolution against imperialism. Instead, Chiang attempted to protect his class interests by regressing Tridemism and turning it into a reactionary ideology that protected the class interests of the big bourgeoisie over the interests of the nation and masses. Chen Boda argued that the big bourgeoisie had turned their backs on Tridemism previously and were doing so again:

The big bourgeoisie betrayed the Great Revolution [Northern Expedition], and relied on imperialism, burying countless people in a sea of blood, establishing a dynasty of new military rule, a new dynasty of big landlord and comprador rule. Yuan Shikai lives again in new clothes. Sun Yat-sen's Tridemism and his three great policies [allying with the USSR, CCP and supporting the Chinese peasantry and proletariat] have been trampled underfoot. The new Yuan Shikai has repeated and made a hundred-thousand times worse all the politics of the old Yuan Shikai—his political trickery, his methods, his policies, his slogans. The bitterness the new Yuan Shikai has given the Chinese people has brought forth a disaster for the Chinese nation, one of immeasurable magnitude. However, the Chinese people led by their helmsman, Mao Zedong, have overcome all limitations to advance, and dauntlessly struggle for liberation.⁷⁹

Chiang regressed Tridemism by twisting the ideology to protect the class interests of the big bourgeoisie and imperialism, studying and learning from reactionaries rather than the revolution. Mao, on the other hand, had learned from revolutionary practice and developed Sun's Tridemism into its true form: the United Front allied to oppose imperialism. Mao, and not Chiang, was therefore the true inheritor of the legacy of Sun Yat-sen. The United Front, however, had changed from its original iteration in Yan'an when Mao invited the bourgeoisie to join it in War against Japan. During the Civil War, the United Front excluded the

⁷⁹ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qieguo dadao Yuan Shikai*, 77.

participation of some of the bourgeoisie by grouping the big bourgeoisie into the enemies of the United Front because of its class interests. The United Front of the Civil War also came to be led only by the proletariat. Whereas during the War against Japan, the United Front meant shared leadership, to support Mao and the CCP's leadership of China, the CCP led the United Front of the Civil War. The exclusion of Chiang Kai-shek and the big bourgeoisie he represented narrowed the United Front, and questioned Mao's thesis that people could transcend their class and recreate themselves through Mao Zedong Thought and participation in the revolution. According to the CCP, Sun's legacy had shifted to the CCP for one other major reason: Sun Yat-sen himself had supported the idea of communism.

IV.B.3. Sun as a Proto-Communist

Proving that Sun Yat-sen was a proto-communist who would have sympathised with the international communist movement was the final aspect of the CCP's campaign for Sun's legacy. Sun was, as the CCP argued, an innovator who had learned to stay at the forefront of the ideological revolution. The CCP argued that Sun would have eventually adopted communism and therefore that Mao picked up where Sun had left off by developing Sun's Tridemism into the United Front and Mao Zedong Thought. Wang Jiaxiang wrote that from the very beginning Sun held an inclination towards socialism, arguing that, "Sun Yat-sen-ism is the democracy of revolutionary struggle. China's Democrat, sympathising with the toiling masses, hating oppressors and exploiters, saw the oppression of Western Europe's toiling masses by capitalism, and created a dream of avoiding the capitalist stage, it created a sympathy for socialism, it created a preference for socialism".⁸⁰ According to Wang, Sun leaned towards communism and socialism because he had seen the struggling proletariat in Western Europe's capitalist societies. This sympathy for the proletariat was the foundation of his policy of land-to-the-tiller and the People's Livelihood third of his Tridemism. Chen Boda pointed out that Sun was just one in an extensive line of revolutionary leaders who represented progress

⁸⁰ Wang Jiaxiang, "Guanyu Sanminzhuyi yu Gongchanzhuyi", 12.

towards realising and adopting communist ideology, each opposed by a representative of the counterrevolution:

China has had two ideologies of cultural tradition: one is that of the masses, is revolutionary, is glorious; one is anti-masses, is counter-revolutionary, is dark. Since the beginning of modern China, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Sun Yat-sen have represented the former, while Zeng Guofan 曾国藩 (1811-1872)⁸¹ and all of China's present-day anti-CCP, anti-people elements represent the latter.... CCP members have inherited all of China's fine revolutionary traditions of Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-1864)⁸² and Sun Yat-sen, while the reactionaries have inherited the traditions of Zeng Guofan and Ye Dehui 叶德辉 (1864-1927).⁸³ The reactionary faction wants to eliminate the former tradition and protect the later, while we are the opposite.⁸⁴

Chen narrated modern Chinese history as a struggle between two lines, just as he had portrayed the history of the CCP as a struggle between incorrect lines and Mao's correct line.⁸⁵ The revolutionary line led from Sun Yat-sen to Mao Zedong, while the counterrevolutionary line ran from Zeng Guofan through Yuan Shikai to Chiang Kai-shek.⁸⁶ These two examples of a much larger discourse on Sun Yat-sen were representative of the CCP argument that Sun was

⁸¹ Zeng Guofan was a prominent late Qing official and military leader who spearheaded the privatisation of armies and then led his semi-private armies to put an end to the Taiping Rebellion. His armies evolved into the Beiyang Army run by Yuan Shikai.

⁸² Hong Xiuquan was the religious and political leader of the Taiping Rebellion who proclaimed himself the brother of Jesus Christ.

⁸³ Ye Dehui was a minor official of the late Qing opposed to the Hundred Days Reform. He was executed on 11 April 1927 in Changsha by CCP inspired or led protests.

⁸⁴ Chen Boda, *Ping 'Zhongguo zhi mingyun'*, 28-29.

⁸⁵ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 239

⁸⁶ Chiang idolised Zeng Guofan and the 1860 Tongzhi Restoration (*Tong zhi zhong xing* 同治中兴), the imperial restoration movement Zeng took part in to reform the Qing dynasty to defeat the Taiping Rebellion. Chiang attempted to apply its lessons to his own movement; Mary C. Wright, "From Revolution to Restoration: The Transformation of Kuomintang Ideology", *The Far Eastern Quarterly* v. 14, n. 4 (August 1955): 515-532. Chen Boda's argument that Sun belonged to the revolutionary lineage and Zeng belonged to the reactionary lineage therefore targeted Chiang's argument that he had inherited the legacies of both Sun and Zeng.

part of an ideological line leading necessarily to communism.

CCP writers argued that Sun's legacy was part of the greater revolutionary tradition leading inevitably to Mao and the CCP to validate Mao's claim to the leadership of China while discrediting that of Chiang Kai-shek. The CCP defined Sun as a revolutionary innovator and proto-communist theorist to portray Sun as a supporter of the CCP's United Front against imperialism. Chiang, on the other hand, represented the big bourgeoisie and other reactionaries protecting their class interests by allying with imperialism in opposition to the United Front. Sun proved Mao's thesis on the ability of individuals to remake themselves and participate in the United Front. Chiang, however, showed that there were exceptions to the rule demonstrating that the big bourgeoisie and other reactionaries could never exceed their class limits and join the United Front. There is an important distinction in Mao Zedong Thought between the ability of an individual and the ability of a class to reform and join the revolution. The sources in this thesis on the historiography of the 1911 Revolution are ill-suited to expand on this distinction, as CCP historians used the two figures of Sun and Chiang as representatives of the national and big bourgeoisie, respectively. These two potentially conflicting narratives over the ability for the bourgeoisie to reform and join the socialist revolution would clash as CCP historians debated the place of the bourgeoisie in the PRC.

V. Conclusion

The campaign against Chiang Kai-shek implemented by the CCP, prior to and during the Civil War, was a carefully orchestrated attack on the foundations of the Nationalist Party's ideology and authority. Unified by Mao's master narrative of history, which became predominant during the War against Japan, the CCP attacked Chiang with a single narrative. The ideological unity provided to the CCP by Mao's master narrative contributed to the success of the campaign against Chiang. Mao taught the members of the CCP to understand and apply the themes of Mao Zedong Thought during the Rectification Movement. Then during the Civil

War, all aspects of the campaign against Chiang Kai-shek—using history as a point of comparison, undermining Chiang’s own master narrative and vying for the legacy of Sun Yat-sen—employed the same themes of Mao Zedong Thought to unite each aspect into a larger campaign. The campaign to discredit Chiang was a success and contributed to the political isolation of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party by the end of the Civil War.⁸⁷ Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played a key role in the campaign by linking Mao Zedong to Sun Yat-sen and portraying Chiang Kai-shek as a traitor to the Chinese revolution.

Mao Zedong Thought and Mao’s master narrative of history adapted to attack Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party. During the Yan’an period from 1935 to 1945, Mao and his associates used narratives of the 1911 Revolution to spread Mao Zedong Thought and Mao’s master narrative of history within the CCP. Organised resistance to Mao’s history did not exist: instead, a disparate group of CCP members disagreed with Mao Zedong Thought in diverse ways. When dealing with the Nationalist Party, however, CCP writers were confronted with a more unified and coherent ideology and narrative of history. In contrast to the Yan’an period when Mao established and promulgated his master narrative within the CCP, Mao could not dictate all the terms of the debate against the Nationalist Party. The historical narratives and arguments of the CCP necessarily had to engage with the Nationalist Party on the Nationalist Party’s ideological ground.

This study of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution demonstrates that each of the themes of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao’s master narrative of history changed due to the encounter with Chiang’s ideology and master narrative. The two themes of Chinese uniqueness and the United Front changed the most, which had an impact on the other two themes of class analysis and periodisation. Accused of using foreign ideologies by Chiang Kai-shek in *China’s Destiny*, the CCP embraced the global application of Marxist theory and its application in China. The

⁸⁷ Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 105-106; Lynch, *Mao*, 136.

CCP kept the theme of China's unique society and historical experience alive, however, through the treatment of Sun Yat-sen. CCP writers argued that Sun devised new revolutionary methods to fit the unique conditions of the Chinese Revolution. The argument tied Sun to Mao as the theorists of the Chinese revolution and validated both Mao's claim to the leadership of China and Mao Zedong Thought. Historians after 1949 continued to debate whether China's revolution was unique or whether it embraced the global application of Marxism.

The United Front of the War against Japan differed radically from the United Front to rebuild China offered by the CCP during the Civil War. Mao Zedong believed that the United Front was not just a tool to gain allies and fulfil revolutionary goals, but a method of remaking people through shared revolutionary commitment. The 1942 Rectification Movement showed Mao that Mao Zedong Thought could remake people into bearers of proletarian consciousness. The CCP's use of Sun Yat-sen in its historical narratives during the Civil War continued to show Mao's belief in the United Front and the ability of people to exceed their class limitations. At the same time, however, Mao and other CCP writers began restricting the United Front by arguing that sections of the bourgeoisie—the compradors and big bourgeoisie—were innately reactionary enemies of the United Front. These writers portrayed Chiang Kai-shek as the representative of the unreformable big bourgeoisie. They argued that the United Front was an alliance of leaders—the proletariat—and followers, in the form of any other patriotic class with no links to imperialism. This new interpretation served Mao and the CCP's goal of claiming the leadership of China. The two coexisting examples of Sun and Chiang showed the limits of the extent to which Mao believed in the ability of individuals to remake themselves and exceed their class limitations. The debate over which elements of society would follow Sun and remake themselves along revolutionary lines, and which would follow Chiang into reaction, defined historical debate after the founding of the PRC and affected the interpretation of all the other themes of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history.

Furthermore, the fight for the legacy of Sun Yat-sen began to reinforce the cult of Mao. Prior to the Civil War, Mao not only justified his leadership over the CCP with the creation and spread of his master narrative of history; Mao also created Mao Zedong Thought to ensure the CCP's ongoing reliance on his leadership. Both the CCP and Nationalist Party already portrayed Sun Yat-sen as the father of the nation and as a leader single-handedly responsible for the fate of China. Moreover, Mao and the CCP portrayed Sun as a theorist of the Chinese revolution who invented the United Front, and Mao as his heir who developed the United Front into its final form. By inheriting the legacy of Sun Yat-sen—both his legacy as the theorist of the United Front and his legacy as the leader of China—Mao further enhanced his authority and increased his pre-eminent position atop the CCP and, after 1949, the PRC.

Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution were only one aspect of the CCP's campaign against Chiang Kai-shek, but they played a crucial role in discrediting Chiang and the Nationalist Party. It was in part due to the CCP's campaign against Chiang, using historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution and the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, that Chiang lost legitimacy with broad swathes of society, so that he became isolated from support outside the Nationalist Party and lost the Civil War with the CCP.

Finally, in much the same way as the War against Japan concealed the differences between the CCP and Nationalist Party, so too did the Civil War hide the differences of interpretation within Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history. So long as the CCP had an external target to focus its historical narratives against, Mao's narrative of the history of the 1911 Revolution remained united and coherent. After Chiang and the Nationalist Party retreated to Taiwan, however, CCP historians began to look inwards and explore the tensions within Mao's master narrative of history.

Chapter 3 – The Challenge of Assessing the Bourgeoisie after the Socialist Revolution (1949–1957)

I. Introduction

A boom in the number of publications on the 1911 Revolution began after the 1949 foundation of the PRC and lasted until the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement. The period of intense publication and debate ended with the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement when Mao redefined Mao Zedong Thought to delineate friend from enemy in the context of the socialist revolution. Consequently, from 1949 until 1957, when Mao answered the question himself, the key issue which historians were attempting to address in narratives of the 1911 Revolution was whether the bourgeoisie would reform like Sun Yat-sen, or become reactionary like Chiang Kai-shek. This chapter shows that the question had immediate implications for the path of China's development and the role of the bourgeoisie in the era of socialist construction, after the 1949 foundation of the PRC.

A shift in Mao Zedong's efforts to justify his rule and policies between 1949 and 1957 led to a period of intense historiographical debate on the 1911 Revolution. The victory over Japan and the Nationalist Party provided Mao and the CCP with widespread legitimacy in China.¹ Mao therefore no longer relied on the narration of history to support his policies and leadership to the same degree as he had prior to 1949. Rather than control the narration of history to build his authority, Mao allowed for some debate over historical narratives as a method of gaining support for his policies from the intellectuals. To meet the challenges of the Korean War² and

¹ Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 58; Frederick C. Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China: From a Charismatic Mao to the Politics of Succession* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1984), 63.

² The Korean War, also known as the War of Resisting America and Aiding Korea (*Kang Mei yuan Chao zhanzheng* 抗美援朝战争) was a war started by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) against the Republic of Korea (South Korea). The United Nations, primarily led by the US, intervened on South Korea's behalf and nearly eliminated North Korea. Chinese forces then joined those of North Korea to push the United Nations forces to a stalemate, dividing the two Koreas along similar borders as before the war. No formal peace agreement has ever been reached, leaving the armistice of 1954 in place.

build the Chinese economy, Mao and the CCP devised policies to engage non-Party intellectuals in the task of rebuilding the country.³ Unlike the national bourgeoisie that the CCP targeted in the Three and Five Antis Campaigns, which employed coercive measures to establish the CCP's control over business and industry,⁴ the intellectuals were subject to a 1951 thought reform campaign similar to the 1942 Yan'an Rectification Movement.⁵ The PRC policy of allowing intellectuals to publically dissent expressed in the 1956 Hundred Flowers Campaign was in fact a continuation of years of policy aimed at attracting intellectuals to contribute to the PRC.⁶ The open criticism of the CCP by intellectuals during the Hundred Flowers Movement showed how few intellectuals took to the Party's thought reform efforts, and suggested to Mao that more coercive measures would be necessary.

Between 1949 and 1957, to support the goal of rebuilding China, Mao focused on spreading Mao Zedong Thought to the expanding CCP. The CCP grew exponentially during and after the Civil War as it expanded its membership to cover all of China. Mao and the CCP taught Mao Zedong Thought to ensure the organisational solidarity of the CCP,⁷ and his master narrative of history played a key role in teaching Mao Zedong Thought.⁸ The CCP focused its Party building efforts on centralising the bureaucracy and chain of command to build the economy.⁹ Moreover, Mao Zedong became less active in his writing after 1949 and did not write new

³ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 33.

⁴ The Three and Five Antis Campaigns (*san fan wu fan yundong* 三反五反运动), which occurred in 1951 and 1952 respectively, targeted both bureaucrats and business people to cut down on corruption and enforce state restrictions on businesses. See Ji, *Linguistic Engineering*, 71-72; Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 87; Teiwes, *Politics and Purges*, 85.

⁵ The campaign to reform intellectuals created significant emotional and mental distress, but rarely resulted in the executions and reform through labour that featured prominently in the other movements occurring around the same time. Some intellectuals enthusiastically received the Party message, but many remained unconvinced. Thought reform campaigns continued frequently between 1951 and 1956: Ji, *Linguistic Engineering*, 72-75; Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 86; Merle Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 88.

⁶ Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China* (White Plains, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1979), 218-219.

⁷ Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, 51; Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 63.

⁸ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 619-620.

⁹ Harding, *Organizing China*, 62-86.

“scriptures” of Mao Zedong Thought for the socialist era.¹⁰ Mao Zedong Thought therefore served Mao and the CCP’s goal of maintaining the unity of the Party and orienting it towards the task of rebuilding China.

In addition to the CCP policy of attracting intellectuals to participate in the rebuilding of China, the expansion of CCP rule throughout China meant that historians not trained in Mao’s master narrative joined the narration of history after 1949. Many of the historians in the newly founded PRC were familiar with orthodox Soviet Marxism¹¹ but not necessarily with Mao Zedong Thought. Moreover, while historians recognised the need to understand Mao’s master narrative, “there was a complex array of political forces and political ideas” that influenced their historical narratives.¹² The period between 1949 and 1957 shows that “at the same time that historiography was functioning as a means of propaganda defined by the Party leadership, it also functioned as an academic field of inquiry in which historians acted and debated according to the rules which they set themselves as if they were occupying an autonomous field of study”.¹³ As a result, many historians sought “complex, pluralistic” interpretations of the past rather than adhere to rigid orthodoxy.¹⁴ Despite the thought reform measures beginning in 1951, intellectuals throughout this period engaged in informal criticism of the CCP and its narratives, believing that the CCP allowed the historical profession some degree of autonomy. Only after the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement ended this period of debate did intellectuals seek out political patrons to protect themselves and their opinions.¹⁵

Political events between 1949 and 1957, however, made Mao begin to fear for his position and caused him to redefine his master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought in order to

¹⁰ Khan and Feuerwerker, “The Ideology of Scholarship”, 5.

¹¹ Knight, *Li Da and Marxist Philosophy in China*, 107.

¹² Cai, *Revolution and its Narratives*, 102.

¹³ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “History and Truth”, 421-422.

¹⁴ Dirlik, *Revolution and History*, 257.

¹⁵ Merle Goldman, *China’s Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 4-10.

maintain his control over the Party and China. In the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev (1884-1971)¹⁶ denounced the excesses of the cult of Stalin in his 1956 Secret Speech.¹⁷ References to Mao Zedong Thought were removed from the 1956 CCP Charter.¹⁸ Subsequently, by 1957, Mao feared that the CCP would emulate Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation in China and not only reduce his degree of control over the CCP and China, but also endanger the socialist revolution.¹⁹ In 1957 Mao began to redefine Mao Zedong Thought to protect his position, and once again used historical narratives to justify and explain the changes.

Moreover, by 1955, problems were emerging in the economy from the application of the Soviet economic model to China, which led to political and scholarly debate around how to solve them.²⁰ The CCP intended for the Hundred Flowers Movement to allow liberalisation among the sciences to address the economic problems, but did not allow the same degree of liberalisation in history.²¹ Unlike many other CCP leaders who followed the Soviet model of economic development, Mao believed that Soviet model of development endangered the socialist revolution and that the masses, rather than the Party, must lead and benefit from development.²² The Hundred Flowers Movement was also Mao's attempt to reverse his loss of power by attracting the intellectuals to his side²³ and develop a Chinese method of socialist construction.²⁴ While many historians disagreed with the Soviet model of historiography, they

¹⁶ Nikita Khrushchev was the leader of the USSR after Stalin's death. He denounced the purges conducted by Stalin and the state-led cult of personality which glorified Stalin, and lead policies of de-Stalinisation in the USSR during his reign. He was removed from power by his opponents in 1964 and allowed to retire peacefully.

¹⁷ The Secret Speech is the common name for the speech given by Nikita Khrushchev to a closed session at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 25 February 1956. The extent to which speech denigrated Stalin was unexpected, and justified Khrushchev's attacks against remaining Stalinists to consolidate his power. The transcript of the speech spread throughout the Communist world quickly.

¹⁸ Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China*, 64; Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 133.

¹⁹ Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 162-163; Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 3.

²⁰ Harding, *Organizing China*, 89-90.

²¹ MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 1, 53-5.

²² Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*, 188-191.

²³ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 134.

²⁴ Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China*, 38.

sought a more nuanced understanding of the past.²⁵ The intellectuals, thus, failed to respond as Mao expected,²⁶ leading to purges of historians during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement. Historical narratives prior to 1957 followed the Soviet historiographical model to endorse the Soviet economic model,²⁷ and thus became retroactively perceived as challenges to Mao's leadership and threats to the socialist revolution.

The historiography of the 1911 Revolution between 1949 and 1957 shows that historians used historical narratives to reshape Mao's master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought for the socialist period. The debate among historians focused on resolving the differences of interpretation within Mao Zedong Thought that had developed by the end of the Civil War in 1949. Foremost among those contradictions was whether the bourgeoisie would follow Sun Yat-sen and adapt to the socialist revolution or follow Chiang Kai-shek into reaction. The answers to the questions of the bourgeoisie all built on interpretations of Mao Zedong Thought which existed prior to 1949. This chapter covers the debates on the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought in narratives of the 1911 Revolution: class analysis, the United Front, the periodisation of modern history and the unique nature of Chinese society. Each reflected the larger debate over the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC and the application of the Soviet economic model to China.

II. Applying Class Analysis to the Bourgeoisie after the Socialist Revolution

Class analysis in Mao Zedong Thought, as employed before 1949, focused on the binary contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism. According to Mao, imperialism interrupted the natural progression of the Chinese bourgeois revolution. Due to the disruption of imperialism, only a United Front could lead China to national liberation through the New Democratic Revolution. During the War against Japan, any class not allied with Japan could

²⁵ Dirlik, *Revolution and History*, 257.

²⁶ MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 1, 311.

²⁷ Wang, "Between Marxism and Nationalism", 95.

join the United Front. By the time of the Civil War between the CCP and Nationalist Party, the CCP restricted the United Front to exclude the participation of the big bourgeoisie and identified the big bourgeoisie as enemies rather than friends of the revolution. The CCP used Chiang Kai-shek as a representative of the big bourgeoisie in its narratives, while Sun Yat-sen represented the reformable, national bourgeoisie.

This section looks at two debates over the history of 1911 Revolution: the debate over the origins of the 1911 Revolution and debate over the evaluation of historical figures. Each section shows that debates on class analysis between 1949 and 1957 reflected contemporary debates on the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC. Historians during the early years of the PRC used the history of the 1911 Revolution as a vector to participate in the contemporary debate about the ability of the bourgeoisie to contribute to the project of socialist construction, and the path that construction should take.

II.A. Class Analysis and the Origins of the 1911 Revolution

Historians writing between 1949 and 1957 used class analysis to determine the causes of the 1911 Revolution. Historians used class analysis to debate whether or not to separate the two types of contradiction to determine if political or economic contradictions led to the 1911 Revolution. Multiple interpretations of the origins of the 1911 Revolution emerged and each represented a different approach and interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought and to the question of whether the bourgeoisie could participate in the United Front of socialist construction. Those historians who identified both political and economic contradictions as the cause of the 1911 Revolution, in effect argued to continue the position offered to the bourgeoisie during the War against Japan, after the formation of the PRC. Those historians who separated economic from political contradictions to identify contradictions in class interests as the primary cause of the 1911 Revolution, envisioned a decreasing role for the bourgeoisie in the PRC. Those historians who researched anti-Manchu sentiment during the

1911 Revolution eschewed class analysis entirely. When Mao redefined Mao Zedong Thought and the role of class analysis in 1957, historians interpreted his remarks as support for the second narrative of contradictions in class interests causing the 1911 Revolution. Giving primacy to class contradictions produced a more restrictive interpretation of class analysis that did not allow for the bourgeoisie to reform itself in the style of Sun Yat-sen and denied it participation in the United Front to build socialism.

Some historians followed Mao's master narrative as iterated prior to the Civil War to argue that economic and political contradictions each contributed to the origins of the 1911 Revolution. These historians therefore argued that the bourgeoisie could still participate in the United Front after 1949 as it had done during the War against Japan because contradictions greater than class existed. Hu Sheng argued that patriotic sentiment engendered by reaction to the Qing dynasty's policy of selling rail and mining rights started the 1911 Revolution.²⁸ Economic rights were at the centre of his argument, yet Hu framed them as a political issue due to the Qing dynasty's sale of domestically owned railways which inspired patriotic revolts to save the country. In his influential and oft-cited work *Lectures in Modern Chinese History*, Wang Boyan 汪伯岩 (1908-1974) wrote:

Domestically, the high tide of this revolutionary movement [the ten years leading up to 1911], was due to the early developments of the Chinese bourgeoisie as well as the deeper corruption of the rule of the Qing government, both propelling the development of the revolutionary forces. On the foreign front, the Chinese national crisis continued to grow worse due to the deepening invasion of international imperialism and its theft of [economic] rights within China.²⁹

²⁸ Hu Sheng, *Diguo zhuyi yu Zhongguo zhengzhi* 帝国主义与中国政治 [*Imperialism and Chinese Governance*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1952), 116-122.

²⁹ Wang Boyan, *Zhongguo jindaishi jianghua* 中国近代史讲话 [*Lectures in Chinese Modern History*] (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1957), 171.

According to Wang, imperialism, the growth of the bourgeoisie, the class interests of the bourgeoisie and patriotism all pushed the revolution forward by an equal degree. Chen Xulu 陈旭麓 (1918-1988)³⁰ also argued for the dual causes of political and economic contradictions by showing that the revolutionary movement grew fastest in the south, due to the strength of the bourgeoisie there and the visible impact of foreign imperialism.³¹ Li Shiyue 李时岳 (1928-1996)³² wrote that the masses joined the 1911 Revolution for the nationalist aim of opposing the Qing dynasty's selling the country to imperialism,³³ but that peasant discontent and uprisings over taxes played a significant role in mobilising the peasantry during the period.³⁴ As had Mao during the War against Japan, these historians argued that while economic contradictions contributed to the cause of the 1911 Revolution, political concerns such as the contradiction between the nation and imperialism could unite classes into alliances. The existence of political contradictions greater than those between class interests, allowed for classes to unite and even renew themselves through shared revolutionary struggle. By supporting Mao's master narrative of history and Mao Zedong Thought as it existed prior to the Civil War, these authors argued that the bourgeoisie could participate in the United Front to rebuild the nation and recreate itself in the manner of Sun Yat-sen.

Some authors put a greater emphasis on establishing the economic origins of the classes and class interests and implied that classes could not set aside their class interests to enter any politically motivated alliance. These historians developed upon the historical narratives produced to attack Chiang Kai-shek, and argued against bourgeois participation in the United

³⁰ Chen Xulu was a prolific historian of modern China, a founding professor of Huadong Normal University and a member of the CCP after joining in 1953. He spent the Cultural Revolution in Fudan University compiling and editing primary materials for republication.

³¹ Chen Xulu, *Xinhai geming 辛亥革命 [The 1911 Revolution]* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1955), 17.

³² Li Shiyue was a 1955 graduate of Peking University and professor of history at Guilin University.

³³ Li Shiyue, *Xinhai geming shiqi Liang Hu di qu de geming yundong 辛亥革命时期两湖地区的革命运动 [Revolutionary Movements in Hunan and Hubei during the 1911 Revolutionary Period]* (Beijing: Sheng huo, du shu, xin zhi san lian shudian, 1957), 92.

³⁴ Ibid, 39-48.

Front of socialist construction. To do so, these authors argued that the 1911 Revolution arose from competing economic rather than political interests. Zhang Shouchang 张守常 (1921-2012)³⁵ explained that economic interests determined both sides of the revolution:

Imperialism and the Manchu Qing government did their utmost to uphold the status quo and the old relations of production to continue their theft and exploitation. At this time, the Chinese national bourgeoisie also began developing, so workers, the bourgeoisie, overseas Chinese capitalists, new intellectuals, some bureaucrats, peasants and handicraft workers all wanted to break down the status quo, break down the old relations of production obstructing the development of the forces of production, pushing the revolutionary tide higher daily.³⁶

While the Qing dynasty worked with imperialist powers, Zhang argued that the fundamental contradiction leading to the 1911 Revolution was the class contradiction between the feudal Qing dynasty and the bourgeoisie. Hu Wenyan 胡文彦 (1930-)³⁷ wrote similarly in a middle school textbook that, “The Qing government chose to nationalise the railways in preparation to sell these already approved private railways to imperialism. People all over the country, particularly those in the provinces where these railroads were built, opposed this. The Railway Protection Movement erupted across all corners of the country. This served as the fuse [which started] the Wuchang Uprising”.³⁸ Hu Wenyan described the origins of the 1911 Revolution as arising from the economic contradiction between the Qing-imperialist alliance and the masses. Wu Yuzhang wrote, “Due to the increasing bullying of imperialist powers, taxes of the Qing government and the deepening exploitation by the landlords, the natural economy of the

³⁵ Zhang Shouchang was a life-long professor of history at Beijing Normal University. Zhang was criticised during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement.

³⁶ Zhang Shouchang, *Zhongguo jindaishi gangyao* 中国近代史纲要 [An Outline History of Modern China] (Tianjin: Lishi jiaoxue yuekan she, 1952), 85.

³⁷ Hu Wenyan is an educator and professor of art history at the Central Academy of Applied Art.

³⁸ Hu Wenyan, *Chuji zhongxue keben Zhongguo lishi di san ce* 初级中学课本中国历史第三册 [Chinese History Textbook for Early Middle School, Volume 3] (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1957), 174.

Chinese villages was severely damaged and handicraft industry in the cities slowly dried up. Therefore, the peasants and handicraft workers rose up to 'resist fees', 'resist taxes' and start 'rice riots', continuously engaging in struggle".³⁹ Wu argued that imperialism and domestic exploitation destroyed the natural economy of China and harmed the economic interests of the peasants, which led to the 1911 Revolution. Imperialism may have caused the destruction of China's natural economy but the economic effects of that destruction, rather than patriotic sentiment, led the peasants to pursue their class interests through class struggle. Class analysis, to these authors, meant the identification and examination of the class interests of each class. These authors viewed class as restrictive in that classes always pursued their class interests. These authors argued that the bourgeoisie would pursue its interests after the socialist revolution by portraying economic contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the Qing dynasty as the cause of the 1911 Revolution. Moreover, these authors followed the Soviet historiographical model to argue for the primacy of class analysis in the periodisation of history and abandoned Mao's theory of the United Front of the New Democratic period. I return to this point later in this chapter.

A much less common argument, but an important one nevertheless, was that factors other than economic and political contradictions caused the 1911 Revolution, including anti-Manchu nationalism directed against the ruling Qing dynasty.⁴⁰ During this era of intense historiographical debate before the Anti-Rightist Movement, some historians felt free to acknowledge and address the presence of anti-Manchu rhetoric in revolutionary tracts published around 1911. Historian Li Shu 黎澍 (1912-1988)⁴¹ wrote of Prince Regent Zaifeng

³⁹ Wu Yuzhang, "Jinian Xinhai Geming sishiwu zhou nian 纪念辛亥革命四十五周年 [Commemorating the 45th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution]", in *Lishi wen ji 历史文集 [Collected Historical Works]*, ed. Wu Yuzhang (Hong Kong: San lian shudian Xiang Gang fen dian, 1978), 68-69.

⁴⁰ For examples of anti-Manchu attacks during the 1911 Revolution and PRC historical coverage of the anti-Manchu discourse of the 1911 Revolution, see Leibold, "Xinhai Remembered".

⁴¹ Li Shu was a student activist during the War against Japan who joined the CCP in 1936. He worked in various government posts after the foundation of the PRC, notably in the Central Propaganda Department, and was an editor of *Historical Research*. He was criticised during the Cultural Revolution, yet returned to work at *Historical Research* in 1975.

(1883-1951):⁴² “As soon as he ascended to the throne, he fired Yuan Shikai, who had taken over military authority from Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823-1901)⁴³.... By April 1911, in the midst of constitutionalist fervour he established an entirely dynastic family cabinet. The 200 odd years of cooperation between Manchu and Han ruling classes broke apart. The forces that the Manchu Qing government depended on to support its rule began weakening because of this”.⁴⁴ Li even more unambiguously wrote that, “The central slogan motivating the [1911] Revolution was opposing the Manchus”.⁴⁵ Li did not necessarily argue that class analysis had no place in determining the origins of the 1911 Revolution. Li’s argument for the importance of race, however, treated race as a motivating factor in the weakening of the feudal ruling class prior to the 1911 Revolution. Rong Mengyuan 荣孟源 (1913-1985),⁴⁶ the most prominent historian of the 1911 Revolution between 1949 and 1957, also referred to anti-Manchu rhetoric. Rong wrote, “Opposing the Manchu Qing was the common goal of all Revolutionary Alliance members, and the revolutionary martyrs all entered into indomitable struggle in pursuit of this goal.... This encouraged and incited countless numbers of the masses to rise up and overthrow the Manchu Qing government”.⁴⁷ Rong, however, did not claim that anti-Manchu sentiment was the only source of the revolution. In an earlier work, Rong argued that the alliance between domestic feudal forces and imperialism created the unique, semi-feudal semi-colonial situation in China.⁴⁸ These authors’ references to anti-Manchu rhetoric

⁴² Zaifeng, also known as Prince Chun 醇亲王, was the father of the last emperor Puyi and regent during his infant son’s reign.

⁴³ Li Hongzhang was the protégé of Zeng Guofan and an eminent official of the Qing dynasty involved primarily in foreign affairs. Li was also involved with the military during the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion, the Sino-Japanese War and the Boxer Rebellion.

⁴⁴ Li Shu, *Xinhai Geming qian hou de Zhongguo zhengzhi* 辛亥革命前后的中国政治 [*Chinese Politics Before and After the 1911 Revolution*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1954), 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁴⁶ Rong Mengyuan was an ex-member of the CCP, officer in the 8th Route Army and founding member of the Chinese Academy of Science Modern History Research Office. He was criticised during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement for his opinions on history. He published prolifically on questions of modern Chinese history throughout the 1950s and again after his rehabilitation following the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976.

⁴⁷ Rong Mengyuan, *Zhongguo jin bainian geming shilüe* 中国近百年革命史略 [*Sketch History of China’s Last Hundred Years of Revolution*] (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinxhi san lian shudian, 1954), 95.

⁴⁸ Rong Mengyuan, “Geren zai lishi shang de zuoyong 个人在历史上的作用 [The Individual’s Effect on History]”, in *Lishi jiaoxue jiangzuo* 历史教学讲座 [*Lectures in History Education*], ed. Beijingshi

sought to explain the prominent place it held in sources produced around the 1911 Revolution by arguing that contradictions other than class and imperialism existed. Li Shu and Rong Mengyuan both employed class analysis in other areas, but argued that some problems could not be solved using this tool when they addressed the issue of anti-Manchu sentiment in the 1911 Revolution. In the climate of the early PRC where historians tested the limits of CCP control over historiography, historians like Rong sought methods other than class analysis to build upon Mao's master narrative of history. After Mao refined Mao Zedong Thought for the socialist era, however, Rong Mengyuan was persecuted for this and other views interpreted as reactionary during the Anti-Rightist Movement in 1957.

II.B. Class Analysis in the Evaluation of Historical Figures

After the foundation of PRC, historians began examining bourgeois figures from the 1911 Revolution to determine whether they fit the mould of either Sun Yat-sen and the reformable national bourgeoisie, or Chiang Kai-shek and the unreformable big bourgeoisie. The debate over the evaluation of bourgeois historical figures from the 1911 Revolution revolved around the question of class analysis and the role it should play in understanding their life and contributions. PRC historians between 1949 and 1957 debated the issue of the evaluation of historical figures along similar lines to the debates on the origins of the 1911 Revolution: some historians argued that political contradictions could cause classes to overcome contradictions of class interests, others argued for the primacy of class contradictions. This section first covers the campaign against Wu Xun 武训 (1838-1896)⁴⁹ and what it meant for the evaluation of historical figures. Second, the section analyses historians' arguments for the primacy of class background in the evaluation of historical figures. Finally, it covers the positions of

zhongxiaoxue jiaozhiyuan xuexi weiyuanhui 北京市中小学教职员学习委员会 (Beijing: Da zhong shudian, 1951), 15-16.

⁴⁹ Wu Xun was a reformer and educator who founded many schools during the late Qing. Wu was the subject of a 1950 film *The Life of Wu Xun*, which was criticised and banned in 1951 for being counterrevolutionary.

historians who argued for less prescriptive class analysis in understanding historical figures.

The CCP, in its campaign against Wu Xun in 1951, argued that only figures who had participated in the revolution against imperialism and feudal forces deserved praise in historical narratives. One of the first political campaigns conducted by the new regime, arose as a reaction to the film, *The Life of Wu Xun* (*Wu Xun zhuan* 武训传). The critical campaign against Wu Xun, which appeared on the pages of the *People's Daily* throughout 1951, defined the standard for the later evaluation of historical figures. Li Yimang 李一氓 (1903-1990)⁵⁰ wrote that, "The issues at the end of the Manchu Qing could not be solved by Wu Xun's pedagogical ideology, nor by the Kang [Youwei]-Liang [Qichao] reformist faction.... Even the later 1911 Revolution, which overthrew the Manchu Qing, could not solve the basic questions facing China at the time".⁵¹ Li argued that no matter how noble Wu Xun's goals may have been, Wu's methods did not contribute to the progress of the revolutionary movement. Mao himself also wrote an article in the *People's Daily* on the issue of Wu Xun:

Someone like Wu Xun, who lived during the time of the Chinese people's resistance to foreign invasion and struggle against domestic foreign rulers at the end of the Manchu Qing, who basically did not even budge the base of the feudal economy or upper level structures by one hair... is this someone we should be praising?... To acknowledge or tolerate this kind of praise is to acknowledge or tolerate the slandering of the peasants' revolutionary struggle, the slandering of Chinese history, the slandering of the Chinese nation and to regard such reactionary propaganda as true propaganda.⁵²

⁵⁰ Li Yimang was an early member of the CCP who participated in the Long March and co-founded the New 4th Army. After the foundation of the PRC he became ambassador to Myanmar. He was jailed for six years during the Cultural Revolution before being rehabilitated in 1974.

⁵¹ Li Yimang, "Qingchu Wu Xun yilei de cuowu jiaoyu sixiang 清除武训一类的错误教育思想 [Expel the Wu Xun Type of Incorrect Educational Ideology]", *Renmin ribao*, 6 February 1951, 3.

⁵² Mao Zedong, "Yingdang zhongshi dianying 'Wu Xun Zhuan' de taolun 应当重视电影'武训传'的讨论 [We Should Pay Attention to the Discussion of the Film *The Life of Wu Xun*]", *Renmin ribao*, 20 May 1951, 1.

Mao argued that Wu Xun had not contributed to the revolution against the feudal ruling class and therefore was neither progressive nor laudable, and moreover served no educational purpose in the contemporary PRC.

Zhou Yang 周扬 (1908-1989),⁵³ a literary theorist and prominent CCP leader tasked with overseeing propaganda and culture after 1949, further claimed, “It should not be surprising [to see] reactionary rulers, from the Manchu Qing dynasty to Chiang Kai-shek, put a foot forward in praise of Wu Xun, for Wu Xun is an important tool in preserving their reactionary rule. It should be noted that whenever [reactionaries] praise Wu Xun this also happens to be when they felt their rule was on the brink of collapse”.⁵⁴ Zhou argued that praise of figures not devoted to the Chinese Revolution against feudalism and imperialism not only served no purpose during the era of socialism, but also that such praise threatened socialism by teaching counterrevolutionary ideologies. Only a few authors between 1949 and 1957 argued that the history of non-revolutionary figures threatened the revolution, but after 1957 many historians adopted and elaborated on Zhou’s opinion.

After the campaign against *The Life of Wu Xun*, many historians in the PRC argued that analysing the class origins of figures could determine whether a historical figure contributed to the revolution, and thus whether historical narratives of those figures served the contemporary revolution. Jian Bozan 翦伯赞 (1898-1968)⁵⁵ offered the following prescription for how to write history: “Dialectical materialists know that the responsibility of historians is

⁵³ Zhou Yang was a member of the CCP and a prominent educator in Yan’an during the War against Japan. After 1949 he worked in the Central Propaganda Department and was vice-Chair of its Cultural Office. He was arrested and persecuted during the Cultural Revolution yet rehabilitated immediately after its end.

⁵⁴ Zhou Yang, “Fan renmin, fan lishi de sixiang he fan xianshizhuyi de yishu; dianying ‘Wu Xun zhuan’ pipan 反人民, 反历史的思想和反现实主义的艺术; 电影‘武训传’批判 [Anti-People, Anti-Historical Ideology and Anti-Realistic Art: A Criticism of the movie *The Life of Wu Xun*]”, *Renmin ribao*, 8 August 1951, 3.

⁵⁵ Jian Bozan was an early member of the CCP, prominent historian and Vice President of Beijing University from 1953. Jian was purged and humiliated during the Cultural Revolution, leading to his suicide.

not to answer ‘how’, but ‘why’. For example, researching the history of Chiang Kai-shek’s gang should not just explain their reactionary political policies; the main goal is to point out the economic sources of this reactionary sovereignty, and point out that he was the product of a semi-feudal semi-colonial economy”.⁵⁶ Jian argued that individuals represented their class and performed the role that the interests of their class needed them to play. Qi Xia 漆侠 (1923-2001)⁵⁷ criticised a high school textbook because it failed to adhere to class analysis:

The topic of this chapter is on the circumstances of the revolutionaries during the 1911 Revolution period, so it should point out the revolutionaries’ class forces, their political opinions, the important characteristics of the leaders and the types of circumstances under which each of the various factions amalgamated into a single revolutionary wave... Following the textbook’s explanations, we cannot see that Sun Yat-sen represented the bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie, nor can we see the contradictions within the revolutionary faction nor the size of the revolutionary forces.⁵⁸

According to Qi, stating which class an individual represented informed how that historical figure contributed to the revolution. Wu Yuzhang wrote that, “Mr. [Sun] Yat-sen... was not greatly influenced by Confucian thought, according to himself. Under the circumstances of the time, however, he did not fervently attack those Confucian theories which had great influence in the ideological realm. Moreover, his nationalism contained within it an ideology which extended the family to the nation. This kind of ideology was very close to Confucianism”.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Jian Bozan, “Zenyang yanjiu Zhongguo lishi 怎样研究中国历史 [How to Study Chinese History]”, in Beijingshi, *Lishi jiaoxue jiangzuo*, 11.

⁵⁷ Qi Xia was a 1948 graduate from Peking University and professor of history at Hebei University after 1953. He specialised in the history of the Song dynasty and peasant wars. He was attacked and sent to labour in the villages during the Cultural Revolution, and returned to work in Hebei University after 1973.

⁵⁸ Qi Xia, “Guanyu ‘Gaoji zhongxue benguo jindaishi (shang ce)’ 关于‘高级中学本国近代史(上册)’ [Concerning *Our Nation’s Modern History for Upper Level Middle School (Volume 1)*”, *Renmin ribao*, 8 April 1953, 3.

⁵⁹ Wu Yuzhang, “Cong sixiang fazhan tan Xinhai Geming de jingyan jiaoxun 从思想发展谈辛亥革命的经验教训 [Speaking on the Experience and Lessons of the 1911 Revolution from Ideological Development],” in *Wu Yuzhang wen ji; xia* 吴玉章文集; 下 [*Collected Works of Wu Yuzhang; Part 2*], ed.

Wu argued that even while Sun did not see himself as Confucian, Sun was in fact tainted by the Confucian ideology of his times and his class background. To Wu, class analysis of an individual's background and interests was more informative than the an analysis of the words and actions of that figure. Historians such as Jian Bozan and Wu Yuzhang used class analysis to determine whether a figure contributed to the Chinese revolution and based their evaluation of historical figures on that assessment. They applied the Wu Xun model to evaluations of the bourgeois historical figures to conclude that their class interests them to only contribute to the bourgeois phase of the revolution, and not to the socialist phase after 1949.

For some historians, however, even a historical figure's participation in the revolution did not guarantee praise in historical narratives because a revolutionary at one time, could become reactionary at another. Historians needed to place praise of an individual's contributions in the context of any later counterrevolutionary activities. Chen Xulu wrote:

Suppose some historical event had an intrinsic progressive effect, that it pushed society's development; those personages who participated in this movement would not all necessarily be considered progressive. For example the creators of the Revolutionary Alliance and leaders of the 1911 Revolution, Sun Yat-sen and Huang Xing 黄兴 (1874-1916),⁶⁰ are both called great revolutionaries, yet Huang Xing was part of the Revolutionary Alliance's rightist faction, and after the 1911 Revolution was not at all in step with Sun Yat-sen's actions, influencing how much the revolution advanced. Although we must affirm that during the revolution he made certain contributions, his thought and actions paved the way for the counterrevolution.⁶¹

Zhong Gong Sichuan sheng wei dang shi gongzuo weiyuanhui 'Wu Yuzhang Zhuan' bianxie zu 中共四川省委党史工作委员会'吴玉章传'编写组 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1987), 924.

⁶⁰ Huang Xing was a leader in the Revolutionary Alliance and later Nationalist Party and among the most important revolutionary generals during the 1911 Revolution. He opposed Yuan Shikai and went into exile after the failure of the Second Revolution, returning only after Yuan's death.

⁶¹ Chen Xulu, *Lun lishi renwu pingjia wenti* 论历史人物评价问题 [On the Problem of Assessing Historical

According to Chen, even participation in one part of the revolution, such as Huang Xing's involvement in the 1911 Revolution, did not prove an individual's dedication to the revolution; only figures who contributed to the revolution in all its phases deserved praise in historical narratives. Without carefully noting a figure's later counterrevolutionary activities, historical narratives might accidentally praise a counterrevolutionary figure and cause harm to the contemporary socialist revolution. Chen developed upon Zhou Yang's remarks on Wu Xun to argue that historians needed to place all prior revolutionary accomplishments in the context of the socialist revolution. Chen projected contemporary categories of the revolution onto the past and denied the contributions of the bourgeoisie to Chinese history in order to deny the place of the bourgeoisie in the contemporary PRC. After Mao refined Mao Zedong Thought for the socialist era by affirming the continued existence of class struggle in socialism, more historians adopted this view and developed it further into a restrictive version of class analysis that applied the narratives of the contemporary class conflict to historical narratives.

Throughout the 1949-1957 period, Rong Mengyuan challenged the argument that class origin limited the ability of a historical figure to contribute to the revolution. On the issue of research on figures from the 1911 Revolution, Rong was alone in this endeavour, although others researching different eras of Chinese history opposed the claim that the narrative of class origins limited the contributions of historical figures.⁶² As early as 1951, Rong argued that to evaluate historical figures historians needed to assess an individual's words and actions throughout their entire life rather than only their class of origin. In his 1951 summary of Sun Yat-sen, Rong wrote, "Sun Yat-sen himself went from being a reformist to being someone who

Figures] (Shanghai: Xin zhishi chubanshe, 1955), 12-13.

⁶² During the Anti-Rightist Movement, Rong Mengyuan was grouped together with historians Xiang Da 向达 (1900-1966), Chen Mengjia 陈梦家 (1911-1966), Lei Haizong 雷海宗 (1902-1962) and Wang Zhonghan 王钟翰 (1913-2007) as rightists within history who opposed the CCP, socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Among other issues, they were accused of using history as a false front to spread bourgeois or feudal propaganda, and their opinions on the evaluation of historical figures from feudal and bourgeois classes played a role in this accusation. See Jian Bozan, "Youpai zai lishixue fangmian de fan shehuizhuyi huodong 右派在历史学方面的反社会主义活动 [Rightists' Anti-Socialist Activities in Historical Studies]", *Renmin ribao*, 4 October 1957, 7.

relied on the worker-peasant masses, the CCP, and the socialist USSR to engage in the anti-imperialist revolution, constantly progressing his whole life. There are many words and actions in his life which deserve criticism, but he is still a hero of China's democratic revolution".⁶³ In 1955, Rong published a work specifically concerned with the assessment of historical personages, and in his section on Sun Yat-sen, Rong wrote:

To completely analyse requires one to study a person's changes over the whole of their life, and to survey those changes, not to cut off history and use a person's single word or action to judge their whole life. Take Sun Yat-sen for example. Although he had some muddled ideology and undertook many mistaken actions for which he should be criticised, no conclusion can be reached from just this point. To judge Sun Yat-sen one must pay attention to two key points. One, his whole life was spent struggling for the democratic revolution.... Two, he progressed throughout his life. From a reformer in 1895, he advanced to a warrior of the old democratic revolution, and then advanced again to engage in the anti-imperialist anti-feudal revolution by allying with the socialist USSR, allying with the CCP and relying on the worker-peasant masses. Therefore, we should affirm that Sun Yat-sen is a hero of China's democratic revolution.⁶⁴

Sun transcended the boundaries of his birth to move from reformer to bourgeois revolutionary, finally becoming an important figure of the New Democratic Revolution. The class of Sun's birth did not determine Sun's ability to contribute to the various stages of the Chinese revolution. Sun's participation in the old bourgeois democratic revolution, moreover, needed no specific contextualisation or comparison to the socialist revolution to have

⁶³ Rong Mengyuan, "Geren zai lishi shang de zuoyong", 26.

⁶⁴ Rong Mengyuan, *Lishi renwu de pingjia wenti* 历史人物的评价问题 [The Problem of Assessing Historical Figures] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1955), 52-53.

meaning. In a 1953 article, Rong wrote similarly on a more complicated historical figure:

Kang Youwei... did not oppose the Manchu Qing government's feudal dictatorship, did not expose the Manchu Qing's so-called 'new government' or 'constitution' plots, and instead protected the Manchu Qing government, making an enemy of the revolutionary party and the Chinese people. Therefore, we must say that the Kang Youwei after the Hundred Days [Reform] was a reactionary. But we cannot erase his progressiveness during the Hundred Days due to his later reactionary behaviour, nor can we ignore his reactionary crimes after 1898 because of the advances of the Hundred Days.⁶⁵

Rong argued that Kang Youwei changed throughout his life and that historians needed to understand the context of an individual's life in order to assess that life. Rong believed that more categories for historical figures existed outside of 'revolutionary' and 'reactionary'; a person could be many things throughout their life and a simplistic classification based entirely on the figure's class background treated complex figures unjustly. To Rong, Sun's participation in the 1911 Revolution and Kang Youwei's support of the Hundred Days Reform were significant, meaningful and progressive events. Rong argued against Zhou Yang's application of the narratives of contemporary class relationships to the past and defended the historical—and contemporary—contributions of the bourgeoisie. Despite the campaign against Wu Xun setting a precedent for the evaluation of historical figures, Rong had reason to believe that the Party and Mao Zedong Thought supported his refutation of the primary importance of class background.

Mao's master narrative of history as iterated prior to 1949 accepted the ability of the

⁶⁵ Rong Mengyuan, "Xuexi Sidalin de 'Bianzheng weiwuzhuyi yu lishi weiwuzhuyi' 学习斯大林的'辩证唯物主义与历史唯物主义' [Study Stalin's 'Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism'], in *Zenyang xuexi zuguo de lishi* 怎样学习祖国的历史 [How to Study the Motherland's History], ed. Zhongguo shixuehui Shanghai fenhui 中国史学会上海分会 (Shanghai: Huadong renmin chubanshe, 1953), 44-45.

members of the bourgeoisie to transcend their class origins. The flexibility of class was not only true of Mao's narrative of history as iterated in the 1940s, it was true at times after the foundation of the PRC. Speaking in 1954 on the draft constitution of the PRC, Liu Shaoqi wrote, "The revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen resolutely advocated for a revolution to implement their dream of a democratic government, which was also a bourgeois democratic government. Under the historical circumstances of the time, this was correct, as they represented the wishes of the masses".⁶⁶ Liu praised Sun for his historical contributions to the entire Chinese revolution, not just the socialist revolution. The *People's Daily* throughout November 1956 was full of references to Sun Yat-sen, completely filling the paper on the 11th and 12th in commemoration of his birth. These many articles were all very formulaic in their references to Sun's role in the 1911 Revolution and praised Sun for remaining dedicated to the revolution through all its phases. Most importantly, these articles praised Sun Yat-sen, regarded him as relevant to the contemporary revolution and overlooked the faults for which some historians blamed him. Mao wrote an indicative piece in praise of Sun Yat-sen and concluded that, "Just as many of the great historical figures who stood on the right side [of history] to guide the flow of the times had their faults, so did Mr Sun have his faulty areas. This should be explained according to historical circumstances to help people understand [the source of the faults], and not be too critical of our predecessors".⁶⁷ Mao's endorsement of Sun Yat-sen appeared to give official sanction to Rong's portrayal of Sun as a hero for his lifetime contributions to the revolution. It also appeared to reduce the importance of class origins in determining the ability of an individual to contribute to the revolution. This heralding of Sun Yat-sen in November 1956 played a role in encouraging intellectuals to participate in the Hundred Flowers Campaign.

⁶⁶ Liu Shaoqi, "Guanyu Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo xianfa caoan de baogao 关于中华人民共和国宪法草案的报告 [Report on the Draft Constitution of the PRC]", *Renmin ribao*, 16 September 1954, 1.

⁶⁷ Mao Zedong, "Jinian Sun Zhongshan xiansheng 纪念孙中山先生 [In Commemoration of Mr Sun Yat-sen]", *Renmin ribao*, 12 November 1956, 1.

During the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, however, CCP-affiliated historians denounced Rong Mengyuan and other historians who argued against class analysis to determine a figure's contribution to history, for their counterrevolutionary views. The exile of the few voices like Rong's led to greater restrictions on in the analysis of historical—and contemporary—bourgeois figures and played a role in redefining Mao Zedong Thought for the era of socialist construction. The new, restrictive version of class analysis that became prominent after 1957 developed from the opinions voiced between 1949 and 1957 that argued historians should analyse historical figures according to contemporary standards rather than according to the context of their times.

III. The Place of the Bourgeoisie in the Historical and Contemporary United Fronts

The United Front was the most important and prominent theme in Mao Zedong Thought prior to the establishment of the PRC in 1949. Mao staked his political life and his control over the CCP, and China, on the theory of the United Front and its applicability to solving the problems of the Chinese Revolution. Mao used historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to prove that the United Front was a uniquely Chinese answer to uniquely Chinese problems. The United Front envisioned by Mao called on all classes willing to fight for China's independence to join together to pursue the New Democratic Revolution, and expel imperialism and its lackeys from China. The theory of the United Front consolidated Mao's power over the CCP as well as validated the CCP's claim to lead China during the Civil War.

After 1949 and the establishment of the PRC, however, the era of the New Democratic Revolution ended, and the era of socialist construction began. As the CCP began to organise society towards the goals of socialist construction and adopt the Soviet economic model of development, the Party and intellectuals debated the scope and purpose of the United Front for the new era. Mao's master narrative of history as iterated in Yan'an did not answer this

question as Mao prescribed the United Front for the era of New Democracy, not the era of socialism. Historians and Party members specifically debated whether the bourgeoisie could be revolutionary during the era of socialism.

The question of the bourgeoisie's place in socialism not only determined the evaluation of historical figures noted previously, but also the place of the United Front in history and in the contemporary PRC. While the United Front became institutionalised in the United Front Department,⁶⁸ at the same time the CCP targeted the bourgeoisie in the Three and Five-Antis Campaigns, and the 1954 Constitution removed the bourgeoisie from the leadership alliance of the PRC and restricted private property rights.⁶⁹ During the 1952 Five-Anti campaign, Mao addressed the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)⁷⁰ to criticise Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988)⁷¹ and define the United Front:

There are two alliances in China: one is the alliance of the working class with the peasantry, and the other is the alliance of the working class with the capitalists, university professors, senior technical personnel, rebellious officers [Nationalist Party officers who joined the CCP side in the Civil War], religious leaders, the democratic parties and unaffiliated democratic personages. Both alliances are necessary and must continue. Which of the two is the base, is most important? The alliance of the working class with the peasantry.⁷²

⁶⁸ For more on the function and activities of the United Front Department in the PRC, see Groot, *Managing Transitions*, 67-116.

⁶⁹ Neil J. Diamant and Xiaocai Feng, "The PRC's First National Critique: The 1954 Campaign to 'Discuss the Draft Constitution'", *The China Journal* 73, n.1 (2015): 11-12.

⁷⁰ The CPPCC (*Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi* 中国人民政治协商会议) is an advisory body founded in 1945 originally to participate in peace talks between the CCP, Nationalist Party and other political parties. It acted as a constitutional committee from 1949 to 1954 when it approved the first PRC constitution. It continues to officially play an advisory role in current Chinese politics.

⁷¹ Liang Shuming was a Confucian philosopher who critiqued Western philosophy, including Marxism. He was a founder of the China Democratic League and attempted to mediate hostilities during the Civil War between the CCP and Nationalist Party.

⁷² Mao Zedong, "Piping Liang Shuming de fandong sixiang 批评梁漱溟的反动思想 Criticism of Liang Shuming's Reactionary Ideology", in *Mao Zedong xuan ji, di wu juan* 毛泽东选集, 第五卷 [Selected

Mao stated that the alliance between the peasants and proletariat was the most important, yet other alliances continued to exist. Whatever remained of the United Front in the PRC was not a mutual alliance of classes, but the proletariat at the centre of a constellation of classes and groups allied only to the proletariat. The alliance between the peasantry and the proletariat was the most important, but how important the other alliances were remained a divisive and debated issue in the politics of the early PRC. The place of the bourgeoisie in the PRC was of considerable note in this debate and historians commented on these contemporary debates over the role of the bourgeoisie by reassessing the United Front of the 1911 Revolution.

Historians used debates over the reasons for the failure of the 1911 Revolution to discuss the composition of the United Front during that time, as well as the composition of the United Front of socialist construction. This section looks first at how the Revolutionary Alliance treated those that the CCP and Mao's master narrative of history deemed to be its friends: the workers and peasants. Second, the section covers how the Revolutionary Alliance treated those who should have been its enemies: reactionary forces such as imperialism, militarists, constitutionalists and feudal landlords. Reflecting the contemporary debate about the place of the bourgeoisie in the PRC, historians researched the friends and enemies of the 1911 Revolution to understand whether the bourgeoisie picked the wrong friends and enemies due to lack of experience, or due to its class interests. Historians who argued that the failure of the 1911 Revolution arose from the bourgeoisie's lack of revolutionary experience argued that the bourgeoisie could learn from the proletariat to support the socialist revolution. Historians who argued that the class interests of the bourgeoisie led to its alliance with the enemies of the revolution argued that the bourgeoisie was therefore also an enemy of the revolution.

III.A. Friends of the Revolution: The Revolutionary Alliance and the Peasants

Historians during the early years of the PRC used historical narratives about the failure of the 1911 Revolution to engage in a debate about whether the bourgeoisie had a place in the revolution after the conclusion of the New Democratic period. Some historians argued that the bourgeoisie lacked the experience and guidance to unite with the masses in 1911, and therefore that education could bring the bourgeoisie to support the proletariat in the PRC. Other historians argued that the gap between bourgeoisie and workers during the 1911 Revolution proved the historical and contemporary contradiction of class interests between the masses and the bourgeoisie.

Many historians between 1949 and 1957 argued that the failure of the Revolutionary Alliance to ally with the peasants and workers, which all historians in the PRC at the time agreed had led directly to the failure of the 1911 Revolution, was a failure of recognition. These historians implied that through proper education members of the bourgeoisie would recognise the mistake of not allying with the workers and peasants and thereafter be able to forge a real alliance between classes. Shui Zhaoxiong 水兆熊 (d.u.)⁷³ wrote that the Revolutionary Alliance, “Did not see the power of the people (such as during the Resist-Russia, Resist-France, Boycott American Goods patriotic movement and other anti-tax movements or the Railway Protection movement), therefore, they did not truly go organise and lead a grand mass movement”.⁷⁴ According to Shui, the bourgeoisie was unaware of the power of the peasantry. If the problem was one of awareness then the bourgeoisie, under the tutelage of the proletariat, could become aware of the peasantry and ally with the masses. Rong Mengyuan similarly claimed, “The Revolutionary Alliance allied with the secret societies only in order to use them to fuel their uprisings, and its members only allied with the top level of the societies.

⁷³ Shui Zhaoxiong was an educator at Zhenhai Middle School in Zhejiang.

⁷⁴ Shui Zhaoxiong, *Zhongguo jindaishi xuexi gangyao* 中国近代史学习纲要 [An Outline of Modern Chinese Historical Studies] (N.P.: Tai Lian chubanshe, 1953), 84.

[The Revolutionary Alliance's] relationship with the lower level broad masses of peasants was not at all intimate, therefore, the uprisings all failed.... Even up to the 1911 Revolution, the power of the masses could not be truly brought forth".⁷⁵ The bourgeoisie attempted to ally with the peasantry according to Rong, but did not recognise its true power and therefore its engagement with the masses lacked depth and understanding. The potential for unity between the bourgeoisie and peasantry went unrealised due to a lack of recognition and experience.

Other historians looked to the issues of organisation and ideology to explain the failure of the Revolutionary Alliance to ally with the peasantry. Li Shu wrote, "This victory [the Wuchang Uprising] was unexpected. The revolutionary party, both in Wuchang and in other provinces across China, had not prepared for victory. The party lacked political experience and lacked a base among the wide masses".⁷⁶ Li argued that the Revolutionary Alliance was unprepared for the revolution because it had neither the requisite time to forge connections with the masses nor had it made organisational preparations for victory. Li Zehou 李泽厚 (1930-)⁷⁷ wrote that, prior to the 1911 Revolution, Sun Yat-sen's slogans of 'equal land rights' and principle of 'People's Livelihood':

Were not turned into a clear, definite revolutionary method, nor were they turned into concrete activities. Therefore, Sun Yat-sen's [slogans of] 'equal land rights' and 'People's Livelihood' were unable to find substantive forces to carry out the policies among the peasant masses, to turn those policies into a truly revolutionary rage to clear away the feudal system, and thoroughly alter the base of the feudal village economy. And the 1911 Revolution in the end "failed due to the lack of this

⁷⁵ Rong Mengyuan, *Zhongguo jin bainian geming shilüe*, 95.

⁷⁶ Li Shu, *Xinhai Geming qian hou de Zhongguo zhengzhi*, 32.

⁷⁷ Li Zehou is a professor of philosophy at Peking University who has written many important works of philosophy both before and after the Cultural Revolution. He was sent to the villages during the Cultural Revolution.

movement in the villages”.⁷⁸

Li thought that the ideology necessary to forge an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the working classes existed in Sun Yat-sen’s Tridemism but that the ideology had not been tempered by revolutionary experience and transformed into method. By extension, now that Tridemism had evolved and found a method of application through the CCP and Mao Zedong Thought the bourgeoisie could ally with the masses. These authors, from Rong Mengyuan to Li Zehou, argued that the United Front failed in the 1911 Revolution because the bourgeoisie that led the revolutionary movement lacked experience and awareness, not because of its class interests. Therefore, these historians also argued that the bourgeoisie could remake itself and participate in the socialist revolution just as Mao and the CCP argued during the Yan’an period that Sun Yat-sen had remade himself.

Other historians argued that the class interests of the bourgeoisie prohibited it from ever allying with the masses. These historians denied not only the participation of the bourgeoisie in the contemporary United Front, but also denied that the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution had been an example of a United Front. In the contemporary context of socialist construction, these authors made the case that any alliance between the CCP and the bourgeoisie would only be temporary since the bourgeoisie would pursue its class interests in opposition to the masses after the socialist revolution. Several important articles in the *People’s Daily* made this case early on in 1951. One editorial argued simply that, “The 1911 Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen at one time moved the peasant masses, but due to the intrinsic weakness of the bourgeoisie the class could not unleash the unlimited revolutionary activism of the peasant masses”.⁷⁹ The editorial argued that, although at certain times the two could

⁷⁸ Li Zehou, “Lun Sun Zhongshan de ‘minshengzhuyi’ sixiang 论孙中山的‘民生主义’思想 [On Sun Yat-sen’s ‘People’s Livelihood’ Thought]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1956 (11): 44. Section in quotes is referenced by the author as *Mao Zedong Xuanji* 毛泽东选集, v. 1, 7.

⁷⁹ “Jinian Taiping Tianguo geming bai zhounian 纪念太平天国革命百周年 [Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Rebellion]”, *Renmin ribao*, 11 January 1951, 1.

appear to have some similar interests and work together, the interests of the bourgeoisie did not meaningfully coincide with those of the masses. Any alliance between the masses and the bourgeoisie was therefore a temporary one. Hu Qiaomu 胡乔木 (1912-1992),⁸⁰ a major actor in the CCP and historical sphere, also wrote in 1951 that, “The Chinese bourgeoisie is weak, it fears imperialism and feudalism, it fears the workers and peasants, it not only cannot [obtain] liberation, it cannot even raise the anti-imperial anti-feudal problem”.⁸¹ Hu argued that the bourgeoisie’s intrinsic fear of the workers and peasants prevented it from uniting with the masses. Hu Wenyan wrote, “When the constitutional monarchists maintained that inciting the ‘base people’ would break down social order, the democratic revolutionaries not only did not say that the point of a revolution was to incite the masses to break down the old order and establish a new society, they in fact said that a revolution could proceed in an orderly fashion”.⁸² The bourgeoisie, according to Hu, fundamentally misunderstood the revolution and instead protected its class interests, making the class an unworthy ally of the proletariat. Li Shiyue argued that the principle of People’s Livelihood in Tridemism, despite its apparent basis in socialism, in fact served to hide the class interests of the bourgeoisie and was intended to prevent a socialist revolution after the democratic revolution.⁸³ These historians believed in a more restrictive version of class analysis that saw class interests as the motivating factor in determining the ability of a class to contribute to the revolution. Because these authors judged the class interests of the bourgeoisie as contrary to those of the masses, they argued that the bourgeoisie could not contribute to the United Front of the contemporary PRC. These historians developed upon the attacks against Chiang Kai-shek, which portrayed Chiang as the representative of an unreformable and reactionary bourgeoisie. During the 1957 Anti-Rightist

⁸⁰ Hu Qiaomu was the editor of the *People’s Daily*, first president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a chief propagandist of the CCP.

⁸¹ Hu Qiaomu, “Zhongguo Gongchandang de sanshi nian 中国共产党的三十年 [The CCP’s Thirty Years]”, *Renmin ribao*, 22 June 1951, 5.

⁸² Hu Wenyan, *Chuji zhongxue keben Zhongguo lishi di san ce*, 164.

⁸³ Li Shiyue, *Xinhai geming shiqi Liang Hu di qu de geming yundong*, 10.

Movement, Mao endorsed this interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought and the United Front.

III.B. Enemies of the Revolution: The Revolutionary Alliance and Reactionaries

In the debate among historians over the place of the bourgeoisie in the United Front of socialist construction the failure of the bourgeoisie to identify its enemies during the 1911 Revolution was just as important as the failure of bourgeoisie to identify its friends. As with the debate over the relationship between the Revolutionary Alliance and its friends in the masses, historians between 1949 and 1957 argued whether the failure of the bourgeoisie to correctly identify its enemies stemmed from a lack of revolutionary experience or the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Some historians argued that the bourgeoisie allowed its enemies into the movement of the 1911 Revolution due to a lack of revolutionary experience, and therefore that the bourgeoisie could learn through experience to correctly differentiate friend from enemy. Other historians argued that the bourgeoisie allowed counterrevolutionaries into the Revolutionary Alliance because an alliance with the counterrevolutionaries served the class interests of the bourgeoisie, making the latter an enemy of the contemporary socialist revolution.

Like the question of the nature of the bourgeoisie's alliance with the working classes covered above, many authors during the early years of the PRC argued that the bourgeoisie's conciliation with reactionaries resulted from inexperience. In the context of the contemporary debate about the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC, these historians argued that the bourgeoisie could reform and contribute to the continuing revolution. Wu Yuzhang wrote, "The reason that China's past 50 years of revolutionary activity has not led China to escape its semi-feudal semi-colonial place, in addition to many other important reasons, is mainly that it was injured by the reformist and conciliatory factions, forcing the revolution to not be thorough and inhibiting it from obtaining real progress or liberation".⁸⁴ The failure of the 1911

⁸⁴ Wu Yuzhang, *Zhongguo lishi jiaocheng xulun* 中国历史教程绪论 [Introduction to a Course of Chinese

Revolution, according to Wu, was due to the attacks of reactionaries rather than the class interests of the bourgeoisie. In another article, Wu expanded on the reasons that the reformist and conciliatory factions were part of the revolution in the first place: “The Revolutionary Alliance that led [the 1911] Revolution, particularly after reorganising into the Nationalist Party, was an extremely irresolute and lax organisation. It wavered on the questions of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, and did not unite with the masses. Therefore, Yuan Shikai stole authority and started the chaos of warlord-ism, so the 1911 Revolution was essentially a failure”.⁸⁵ According to Wu, the faulty organisational methods of the Revolutionary Alliance allowed counterrevolutionary elements into the revolution who then sabotaged the revolution from the inside. Wu hinted that ideology was the source of this laxity: the Revolutionary Alliance wavered on important questions of ideology and thus allowed ideologically impure members to join. So long as the leadership of the revolution rested in a party better organised around a unifying and correct ideology—a party like the CCP—no such mistakes would be made again. The United Front worked in theory but not in application during the 1911 Revolution, meaning that the participation of the bourgeoisie was not the weak link leading to the failure of the 1911 Revolution and that it could participate in the ongoing socialist revolution.

Other authors argued that the 1911 Revolution failed due to the inability of the bourgeoisie to establish its authority after the revolution, a mistake of knowledge and awareness rather than the pursuit of class interests. Deng Zihui 邓子恢 (1896-1972)⁸⁶ wrote that, “While the bourgeois-led 1911 Revolution overthrew the authority of Qing government, it did not take authority in its own hands and voluntarily gave authority to the feudal landlord class, causing

History] (Shanghai: Xin hua shudian, 1950), 21-22.

⁸⁵ Wu Yuzhang, “Wuxu Bianfa de lishi jiaoxun 戊戌变法的历史教训 [Historical Lessons of the Hundred Days Reform]” in Wu, *Lishi wen ji*, 65-66.

⁸⁶ Deng Zihui was a member of the CCP since 1926 and an important military officer and writer on problems in the villages. He held prominent positions in the PRC but was criticised and eventually left untreated to die of illness during the Cultural Revolution. Deng was posthumously rehabilitated.

the eventual failure of the 1911 Revolution”.⁸⁷ The bourgeoisie, according to Deng, misunderstood what made a class a friend or enemy of the revolution; because some in the feudal landlord class opposed Manchu rule of China, the bourgeoisie allowed them to join the Revolutionary Alliance and infiltrate the revolution. Now that the CCP clarified the friend-versus-enemy distinction the bourgeoisie could learn not to make the same mistake. Hu Wenyan wrote that:

The most critical weakness of the democratic revolutionaries was their failure to recognise the importance of revolutionary authority. Therefore, the [revolutionaries] thought that their prestige was not high enough to be the leaders of a new authority, so they made Qing military officials who had no connection with the democratic revolution the leaders of the military government.... As a result, revolutionary warriors were on the front lines giving their lives, while the constitutional monarchists were back in the government breaking down the revolution, slowly altering the revolution’s makeup.⁸⁸

Deng and Hu both argued that the bourgeoisie failed to correctly differentiate friend from enemy during the 1911 Revolution and that the revolution failed when it allowed the enemies of the revolution to take over authority. According to Mao’s master narrative of history during the Yan’an period, it was only after the 1911 Revolution that Sun Yat-sen and the CCP fully learned the nature of the Chinese revolution and correctly differentiated friend from enemy. By supporting this interpretation of the United Front of the 1911 Revolution these historians argued that the bourgeoisie could remake itself like Sun Yat-sen and learn from revolutionary experience to identify friend from enemy.

⁸⁷ Deng Zihui, “Wei gonggu renmin minzhu zhuanzheng de guojia zhengquan er fendou 为巩固人民民主专政的国家政权而奋斗 [Struggle for the Consolidation of the People’s Democratic Dictatorship over National Authority]”, *Renmin ribao*, 1 July 1951, 6.

⁸⁸ Hu Wenyan, *Chuji zhongxue keben Zhongguo lishi di san ce*, 178.

Other historians disagreed and saw the failure of the 1911 Revolution arising from the bourgeoisie advancing its class interests through alliances with reactionary elements. These historians argued that the bourgeoisie knowingly allowed reactionaries to take authority during the revolution because the bourgeoisie itself was an enemy of the revolution. Such historians used historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to suggest that in the contemporary debate over the role of the bourgeoisie in socialist construction, the bourgeoisie could not join the socialist revolution due to a conflict of class interests between it and the masses. Zhang Shouchang wrote that Chinese capitalism was not yet fully developed by the 1911 Revolution and therefore that:

After the establishment of the Wuchang military government, according to the Revolutionary Alliance's prepared foreign announcement, all Manchu Qing era unequal treaties would be acknowledged in order to secure the 'neutrality' of imperialism and isolate the Manchu Qing. In reality, it was an expression of its weakness in not daring to accuse imperialism, allowing the fetters of imperialism to continue.⁸⁹

Contrary to the stated goals of the Revolutionary Alliance, Zhang argued that the Revolutionary Alliance could not repudiate the unequal treaties because the bourgeoisie could not attack a system which served its class interests. Shui Zhaoxiong added that all classes had innate weaknesses at the time, claiming that, "During the age of imperialism, the representatives of the semi-feudal semi-bourgeoisie reformist faction were timid and incapable. The representatives of the peasantry in the Boxer Rebellion followed a blind and ignorant road. The representatives of the bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie—the leaders of the 1911 Revolution—were conciliatory by nature".⁹⁰ Shui's obvious implication was that only

⁸⁹ Zhang Shouchang, *Zhongguo jindaishi gangyao*, 99.

⁹⁰ Shui Zhaoxiong, *Zhongguo jindaishi xuexi gangyao*, 86.

the proletariat could lead China. Each class had defined class interests and capabilities and would contribute to, or oppose the revolution according to those interests and capabilities. The interests of the bourgeoisie made it an enemy of the revolution. Therefore, without the leadership of the proletariat, according to this analysis, obtaining victory in the revolution was impossible.

Historians during the early 1950s agreed that the 1911 Revolution failed due to the inability of the bourgeoisie to correctly distinguish friends from enemies. The reasons for that failure differed as some argued that innate class traits determined the alliances during the revolution while others argued that the bourgeoisie's inexperience and lack of recognition of friend versus enemy sealed the fate of the revolution. Authors sometimes stood in both camps simultaneously. Shui Zhaoxiong identified inexperience as ruining the potential alliance between the bourgeoisie and working classes yet also noted that the innate weakness of the bourgeoisie caused it to ally with imperialism. Hu Wenyan argued that the intrinsic class weakness of the bourgeoisie prohibited it from allying with the working classes, but that poor foresight caused the bourgeoisie to deliver authority to the reactionaries. The debate over the role of the bourgeoisie in the United Front of the 1911 Revolution reflected the contemporary debate about the ability of the bourgeoisie to contribute to the United Front: no clear answer yet existed and each side claimed to inherit and develop upon the master narrative of history written by Mao Zedong prior to 1949. After the Anti-Rightist Movement, however, the issue became far clearer as Mao iterated a revised interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought and his master narrative of history that defined the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as fundamental to the period of socialist construction.

IV. The Periodisation of History and the Defining Contradiction of the Socialist Era

One of the most animated debates among historians between the foundation of the PRC in

1949 and the Anti-Rightist Movement in 1957 was the issue of how to periodise modern Chinese history. Historians' debated the periodisation of history, focusing on how contradictions were resolved and which contradictions existed during the 1911 Revolution. Throughout this debate, historians discussed whether China had entered a new period of history with the establishment of the PRC and what contradiction defined that period. Different interpretations of the periodisation of history, each claiming to develop upon Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative, represented different views on whether the PRC would continue to include the bourgeoisie within the United Front of socialist construction. Teiwes argued that the debate on periodisation only really began around 1956 when Mao launched the Hundred Flowers Campaign.⁹¹ H. F. Schurmann argued that contradictions only became crucial to Mao Zedong Thought after Mao's publication of "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People" in 1957.⁹² While debate on the issue of periodisation was vigorous due to the Hundred Flowers Campaign, and remained so after 1957, this section shows that the debate over periodisation according to contradictions was active throughout the early years of the PRC.

During the War against Japan, Mao Zedong argued that the interference of imperialism in China's bourgeois revolution created a unique revolutionary period in China unlike other bourgeois revolutions around the world. Only a United Front of all revolutionary classes led by the proletariat could attain the dual goals of a bourgeois revolution and national independence during the period of the New Democratic Revolution. The periodisation of history in Mao's master narrative supported Mao's policy of the United Front and his leadership over the CCP, and later over China as the CCP used the United Front to attack Chiang Kai-shek.

⁹¹ Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China*, 220.

⁹² H. F. Schurmann, "Organisational Principles of the Chinese Communists", 88-89.

Two major trends in periodisation emerged during the debate between 1949 and 1957, and each interpreted Mao Zedong Thought to suit the political goals of the historians writing on the periodisation of history. One side held that the resolution of fundamental contradictions defined the periodisation of history. These historians argued that one fundamental contradiction defined a period, and once resolved immediately led to the beginning of a new period defined by a new fundamental contradiction. As such, these historians argued that a new contradiction defined the new period of socialist construction—not the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation that had defined the period of New Democracy. Historians of the opposing opinion argued that single, fundamental contradictions could not describe the complexities of history and instead transitional periods existed as new contradictions gradually replaced old contradictions. These historians therefore argued that the legacies of the period of New Democracy—such as the inclusion of the bourgeoisie in the United Front—could continue well into the period of socialist construction.

IV.A. The Resolution of the Fundamental Contradictions in Historical Change

Most historians between 1949 and 1957 argued that single, fundamental contradictions defined the periodisation of history and that the resolution of those contradictions led to a new period defined by a new contradiction. In doing so, these historians developed upon the periodisation in Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history iterated prior to 1949, which identified the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation as the fundamental force motivating modern Chinese history. These historians argued that the foundation of the PRC marked a new period in history by arguing for the periodisation of history based on a single, fundamental contradiction. The United Front of all revolutionary classes allied against imperialism, as it existed prior to 1949, therefore did not necessarily apply after 1949 and the beginning of the period of socialist construction.

Many historians followed the periodisation outlined by Mao's master narrative of history by

identifying the 1919 May Fourth Movement as a turning point in modern Chinese history. For example, Wang Renchen 王仁忱 (1912-1968)⁹³ wrote that after the 1911 Revolution, “The fundamental contradiction of Chinese society was expressed as the bourgeoisie and the masses against the representatives of the reactionary imperialist-feudal mix of the big landlords and big compradors. Class relations and the essence of the revolution did not change... so [the 1911 Revolution] did not open up a new stage”.⁹⁴ Wang argued that a single, fundamental contradiction defined modern Chinese history and any event which did not solve that contradiction did not affect the periodisation of history. Historians Shi Jun 石峻 (1916-1999),⁹⁵ Ren Jiyu 任继愈 (1916-2009)⁹⁶ and Zhu Bokun 朱伯崑 (1923-2007)⁹⁷ claimed in their textbook that:

The contradiction between the Chinese masses (all revolutionary classes) and imperialism-feudalism is the fundamental contradiction in Chinese modern society.... The struggle caused by this contradiction intensified, creating the daily rise in the Chinese people’s revolutionary movement over the last hundred years. Starting from the Opium War, going through the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom revolution, the Sino-Japanese War, the Hundred Days Reform movement, the Boxer movement, the 1911 Revolution, the May Fourth Movement and the New Democratic Revolution afterwards, all these stages, looking at the whole, carried the essence of the bourgeois democratic revolution.⁹⁸

⁹³ Wang Renchen was a member of the CCP, a student activist during the War against Japan and the head of the history department of Tianjin Normal University after 1952. He was also an editor of *Historical Research*.

⁹⁴ Wang Renchen, “Dui Zhongguo jindaishi fenqi wenti de shangque 对中国近代史分期问题的商榷 [A Discussion on the Problem of the Periodisation of Modern Chinese History]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1956 (12): 71.

⁹⁵ Shi Jun was a professor of the history of philosophy at Wuhan University, Peking University and the People’s University.

⁹⁶ Ren Jiyu was professor of the history of philosophy at Peking University between 1942 and 1964 and founder of the Chinese Academy of Science World Religions Research Office.

⁹⁷ Zhu Bokun was a professor of the history of philosophy at Peking University since 1952.

⁹⁸ Shi Jun, Ren Jiyu and Zhu Bokun, *Zhongguo jindai sixiang shi jiangshou tigang* 中国近代思想史讲授提纲 [Lecture Outline for Modern Chinese Intellectual History] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1955), 14.

The single contradiction between the masses of the Chinese nation and imperialism period defined the period from the Opium War through to the establishment of the PRC, according to this textbook. The period of the democratic revolution was punctuated by the May Fourth Movement which caused the sub-periodisation between the eras of old and New Democracy. Wang Boyan argued that, “Although the form of authority had changed and been made anew [in the 1911 Revolution], the imperialism and feudalism weighing down the people’s heads did not budge, and China’s semi-colonial semi-feudal nature was completely preserved”.⁹⁹ Wang argued that the 1911 Revolution made no impact the contradiction between the masses and imperialism and therefore that the 1911 Revolution did not affect the periodisation of history.

Some historians identified separate schemes of the sub-periodisation of modern Chinese history that placed the 1911 Revolution in a more prominent position in Chinese history. Despite the differences in sub-periodisation, these authors still largely followed the periodisation of history in Mao’s master narrative by continuing to identify the contradiction between the masses and imperialism as the fundamental contradiction of modern Chinese history. In a discussion article including the opinions of multiple authors, Sun Zhengrong 孙正容 (1908-1985)¹⁰⁰ argued that, “The problem of the periodisation of modern Chinese history is a problem of periodising one kind of internal social formation, not of periodising many kinds of social formations, therefore, we should not look to the issue of changes in the methods of production, rather we should pay attention to the aspect of the changes to the breadth and depth of the semi-colonial semi-feudal social formation”.¹⁰¹ Sun argued that the 1911 Revolution marked a new sub-period within Chinese history because it further entrenched the

⁹⁹ Wang Boyan, *Zhongguo jindaishi jianghua*, 203.

¹⁰⁰ Sun Zhengrong was a professor of history at multiple universities prior to and during the War against Japan. After the foundation of the PRC he participated in the foundation of Zhejiang Normal University where he was head of the history department.

¹⁰¹ “Zhongguo jindaishi fenqi wenti de taolun 中国近代史分期问题的讨论 [A Discussion of the Periodisation of Modern Chinese History]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1957 (3): 81.

semi-colonial semi-feudal state of Chinese society. Hu Sheng wrote:

The five years after the failure of the Boxer Rebellion started the third high tide of the revolutionary movement. The high mark of this tide was the 1911 Revolution.... As soon as a national bourgeois uprising began the revolutionaries started mixing with the constitutional monarchists in order to bring a swift end to the revolution and establish a 'stable order'. Because of this, the conclusion of the 1911 Revolution was that... the free bourgeoisie allowed the landlord class turned bourgeoisie to join [the revolution] as well, and this latter group brought the revolution down the road of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie as well as their puppet masters: foreign imperialism.¹⁰²

To Hu, while the 1911 Revolution represented a new high tide in the revolutionary movement, the 1911 Revolution did not affect the fundamental contradiction between the masses and the forces of imperialism in China. While Sun and Hu departed from the more generally accepted version of sub-periodisation of modern Chinese history, both argued that the fundamental contradiction between the Chinese masses and imperialism defined the entire period of modern history.

Just as Mao used historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution and the periodisation of history to validate his policies prior to 1949, historians after 1949 applied the same periodisation to support new policies. Regardless of whether the 1911 Revolution marked a new era in the periodisation of history, most historians argued, as had Mao prior to 1949, that the fundamental contradiction between the Chinese masses and imperialism defined the periodisation of modern Chinese history. Therefore, according to these historians the foundation of the PRC ended the period of the New Democratic Revolution by halting

¹⁰² Hu Sheng, "Zhongguo jindai lishi de fenqi wenti 中国近代历史的分期问题 [The Problem of Periodising Modern Chinese History]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1954 (1): 12-13.

imperialist interference in China and a new contradiction defined the period of socialist construction. Historians hinted that the new contradiction fundamental to contemporary China was between the contradiction between bourgeoisie and the masses. In 1957, Mao endorsed the narrative that class conflict defined the socialist era and emboldened historians such as these to portray class conflict as fundamental to the periodisation of history.

IV.B. The Gradual Advance of Quantitative Change

On the other side of the debate were the minority of historians who believed that the periodisation of history was based on many factors rather than a single, fundamental contradiction. These historians used the same general dates as their colleagues who argued for a single contradiction to determine the periodisation of history, but identified transitional phases within it. For example, Jin Yufu 金毓黻 (1887-1962)¹⁰³ noted that historians of the early PRC tended to write separate historical accounts for revolutionaries and reactionaries rather than integrating the two stories into a single narrative. He instead argued that, “The two are intimately related and cannot be separated, and we should organise these periods of historical sources according to this principle”.¹⁰⁴ Insisting that to understand a period one needed to research both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary historical sources, Jin argued for a wider approach to history and to periodisation. Grey areas existed within the context of class struggle and class contradictions which historians needed to understand by examining both reactionary and revolutionary sources. Sun Shouren 孙守任 (d.u.)¹⁰⁵ argued for

¹⁰³ Jin Yufu was a prominent educator throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. He was arrested by the Japanese military for participation in the December 9th protests, yet also briefly worked in government and academic offices in Japanese-held Manchuria after his release. He became a professor of social science at Peking University and a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Science.

¹⁰⁴ Jin Yufu, “Guanyu zhengli jindai shiliao de ji ge wenti 关于整理近代史料的几个问题 [On Several Problems of Organising Modern Historical Materials]”, *Xin jianshe* 新建设 [*New Construction*] v.3, n.2 (January 1950): 18.

¹⁰⁵ Sun Shouren was a prominent professor of history throughout the republican period at the North East Normal University. He remained active after the establishment of the PRC, particularly on issues of historical methodology.

transitional phases rather than sharply defined borders in the periodisation of history:

1905-1919 was the stage of opening the bourgeois democratic anti-feudal revolution and of the beginning of the shift from the old democratic revolution to the New Democratic revolution. The founding of the Revolutionary Alliance marked the start of “a more significant” bourgeois democratic revolution, and under the leadership of the petite bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, with the passionate participation of the worker-peasant masses, [the Revolutionary Alliance led the] formation of the 1911-1912 nation-wide revolutionary high tide.¹⁰⁶

Even as Sun agreed that single, fundamental contradictions defined the periodisation of history, he argued that this contradiction was far too complex and multifaceted in its effects on society to be solved all at once. Instead, Sun argued for the existence of transitional periods as the complexities of class contradictions unravelled and were resolved incrementally.

Other historians identified forces external to China, and therefore external to China’s class relations, as influencing the periodisation of modern Chinese history. Li Shu wrote that, “Two major changes occurred domestically. One was that European capitalist countries all joined the World War and had no time to pay attention to the East, allowing Chinese industry space to develop, and from that the proletariat began to grow. The other was that since the failure of the 1911 Revolution, under the influence of dark military rule and the World War, a great new cultural movement against feudalism was formed in the ideological realm”.¹⁰⁷ According to Li, economic, political and ideological factors all contributed to the circumstances of each historical era. The contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism remained important but was only one factor among other developments in the periodisation of history.

¹⁰⁶ Sun Shouren, “Zhongguo jindai lishi de fenqi wenti de shangque 中国近代历史的分期问题的商榷 [A Discussion on the Problem of Periodising Modern Chinese History]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1954 (1): 12-13.

¹⁰⁷ Li Shu, *Xinhai Geming qian hou de Zhongguo zhengzhi*, 137.

Rong Mengyuan argued that revolutions and periods sometimes overlapped: “Solving the land problem and completely throwing out the feudal system is in the category of the democratic revolution, not the category of the socialist revolution. The Revolutionary Alliance called solving the land problem socialism, and confused the difference between the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, which was a mistake. In the greater historical significance of opposing feudalism, however, it was correct”.¹⁰⁸ Rong noted that the basic thrust of socialism as employed by the Revolutionary Alliance was beneficial for the development of the revolution even though its specific usage led to ideological confusion, conciliation and the failure of the revolution. Looking at the viewpoints presented in this section, although the authors may not have agreed with one another as to how or why they periodised history, each argued that many varied factors contributed to the progress of the revolution and the periodisation of history. All believed that the end of one historical period and the beginning of a new one did not imply an immediate change to class relationships. Transitional periods existed where new contradictions gradually replaced the old contradictions. Their argument implied that the contemporary bourgeoisie could still play a role during a transitional phase between the periods of New Democracy and socialism.

Much like the deliberations over the issues that defined the origins and failure of the 1911 Revolution, the debate on the periodisation of history revolved around how Mao Zedong Thought applied after the socialist revolution. Those who focused on periodisation based on a single, defining contradiction and its resolution were more restrictive in their class analysis and therefore tended to view the contemporary bourgeoisie as enemies of the socialist revolution. Those who argued for transitional periods and the existence of multiple contradictions in the periodisation of history saw the bourgeoisie as potentially contributing to socialist construction. Periodisation, and other issues surrounding the history of the 1911 Revolution,

¹⁰⁸ Rong Mengyuan, “Xinhai Geming qian Zhongguo shukan shang dui Marksizhuyi jieshao 辛亥革命前中国书刊上对马克思主义介绍 [Introductions to Marxism in Chinese Publications prior to the 1911 Revolution]”, *Xin jianshe* 1953(3), 10.

show that historians used historical narratives to debate the application of Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative of history to the contemporary period of socialist construction. In 1957 Mao began interpreting these debates as challenges to his power and even to the progress of the socialist revolution. This led to the purge of many intellectuals during the Anti-Rightist Movement and the pivot of Mao's master narrative of history towards the identification of the contradiction between the masses and the bourgeoisie as defining the socialist period.

V. The Unique Lessons of the 1911 Revolution

Prior to the foundation of the PRC in 1949, to justify his leadership over the CCP Mao Zedong argued that he had adapted Marxism to fit Chinese circumstances. Mao attacked the foreign training of his competitors between 1935 and 1945 by arguing that the Chinese revolution was unique in the world and therefore required a unique variation of Marxism to understand and lead it. Mao built his master narrative of history to spread the belief that China's revolutionary circumstances were unique and that Mao Zedong Thought was the adaptation of Marxism to China. During the Civil War, however, Mao and the CCP were forced to defend the universal application of Marxism and to deny the uniqueness of China's revolution to counter Chiang Kai-shek's accusations that the CCP imported harmful foreign ideology. These different approaches to the question of how Marxism adapted to Chinese conditions all reflected and supported goals contemporary to their writing.

After 1949, historians debated what made the Chinese revolution unique and what lessons China's unique experience could teach the contemporary period of socialist construction. As was true with the debates over the other themes of Mao Zedong Thought in Mao's master narrative, the debate over the lessons of the revolution reflected political debate over the nature of China's new period in history. Historians asked whether China's revolution remained unique after 1949 and thus whether China still needed to find its own path. The question was

an important one between 1949 and 1957 because the PRC followed the advice and economic model of the USSR, and historians chose historical narratives that justified the imposition of the Soviet economic model onto China.¹⁰⁹ To support the Soviet-style economic policies in China, historians adopted Soviet-style historical narratives and denied the unique nature of Chinese society. After 1957 when the Sino-Soviet Split¹¹⁰ began to take shape, however, the pre-1949 themes of Mao Zedong Thought that portrayed China as unique and pioneering a new revolution for the third world returned to dominate the historiography of the 1911 Revolution.

At the same time as historians defended the Soviet economic model by following the Soviet historiographical model, historians also debated the place of the bourgeoisie in historical narratives. Khan and Feuerwerker suggested that the period from 1949 to 1957 was rife with the debate over whether history should serve Marxism or nationalism.¹¹¹ Those who defended nationalism defended not only the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC, but also the historical contributions of the bourgeoisie. During the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, historians purged the prominent defenders of nationalism and the historical contributions of the bourgeoisie within their midst. This debate over the place of nationalism in historical narratives was the beginning of the 1960s debate over the relative importance of facts (*shi* 实) versus theory (*lun* 论); historians debated whether theory should be tested against the data of history to determine its veracity or if theory should instead serve to guide the interpretation of data.¹¹²

This section looks at these two different debates: the first over how historians reinterpreted

¹⁰⁹ Wang, "Between Marxism and Nationalism", 95.

¹¹⁰ The Sino-Soviet Split refers to the drastic change in Sino-Soviet relations, when China and the USSR went from being close treaty partners to enemies. The Split occurred as a result of ideological arguments over the interpretation of Marxism, leadership over the global communist movement and some border disputes. Relations between the two countries soured and became adversarial and led to a complete withdrawal of Soviet aid to China in 1960 and the severing of diplomatic channels in 1962.

¹¹¹ Khan and Feuerwerker, "The Ideology of Scholarship", 1.

¹¹² Wang, "Between Marxism and Nationalism", 110-111; Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 621.

Mao's master narrative and its theme of Chinese uniqueness to instead follow Soviet historiography, and the second over whether historians should use bourgeois figures to inculcate nationalism. Each of these debates reflected contemporary political debates about the suitability of the Soviet economic model in China and the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC.

V.A. The Lessons of Chinese History and the Soviet Model

Many CCP historians used narratives of the 1911 Revolution to rewrite Mao's master narrative of history away from its focus on Chinese uniqueness, and instead applied a model of Soviet historiography to the 1911 Revolution. By doing so, these historians attempted to validate the Soviet economic model which the CCP adopted to rebuild China. The adoption of the Soviet historiographical model primarily meant researching the economic base of society rather than the political superstructure to find and transmit lessons from history. Chinese historians argued for a universal theory of Marxism rather than for the adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions by focusing on how contradictions in the relations of production led to revolutions. For example, in a 1950 article CCP member Jian Bozan wrote that, "The progress of history is the [story of the] struggle produced by mankind to exist. So, we should not wish to ascribe the motivating forces of historical progress to 'brilliant men', to dreams, or to gods or emperors; rather, we should ascribe it to production of the means for material life, and to the methods by which the means for material life are produced".¹¹³ Jian argued that history should teach people not about the individuals who contributed to history, but rather should focus on the means of production. Jian argued for the Soviet model of historical progress which identified discreet stages in the development of the means of production. Yan Zhongping 严中平 (1901-1991)¹¹⁴ lamented in 1956, that historians of the early PRC had not spent enough time

¹¹³ Jian Bozan, "Zenyang yanjiu Zhongguo lishi", 7.

¹¹⁴ Yan Zhongping was an economist and historian in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

researching the economic issues of China:

The backward state of work on China's modern economic historical studies has become a weak link in the research on all historical questions on Chinese society, which has brought great difficulties to all research work. After liberation, many of the works on historical questions in modern Chinese society, particularly research on the history of peasant uprisings, were treatises [i.e., theory-based rather than evidence-based]. The basic economic analysis of these works, however, lacked abundant materials and showed incompetence.... For example, the explanations of the Hundred Days Reform and 1911 Revolution were largely limited to the ideological and political activities of individuals and parties, rarely analysing the economic circumstances of society at the time.¹¹⁵

History ought to teach lessons about the absolute law of the direct relationship between economic development and the progress of history, according to Yan. Hu Wenyan wrote in his 1957 teachers' guide to modern history that, "When explaining Sun Yat-sen's creation of the Revolutionary Alliance, one must strongly point out the crucial importance and effect of the appearance of the Revolutionary Alliance. Explain that it was China's first bourgeois revolutionary political party and that its appearance indicated that the democratic revolution had progressed to a new stage".¹¹⁶ Hu did not periodise Chinese history according to Mao's theory of the New Democratic Revolution but according to the traditional Marxist—and Soviet—periodisation of the bourgeois revolution. Historians like Jian, Yan and Hu departed from Mao's master narrative of history and instead followed the Soviet model of historiography to support the application of the Soviet economic model to China.

¹¹⁵ Yan Zhongping, "Zhongguo jindaishi yanjiu shang de yi ge boruo huanjie 中国近代史研究上的一个薄弱环节 [A Weak Link in Research on Modern Chinese History]", *Renmin ribao*, 17 July 1956, 7.

¹¹⁶ Hu Wenyan, *Chuji zhongxue keben Zhongguo lishi di san ce*, 166.

Rong Mengyuan also contributed to this discourse by arguing that the individual was incapable of changing the course of history. Rong wrote, "History progresses according to certain rules, and no reactionary element can overturn the wheel of history, and no one can exceed the rules to craft history.... Sun Yat-sen's fantasy of a democratic revolution and a social revolution 'to succeed in one fell stroke' was not realised. This example is clear proof".¹¹⁷ Rong also wrote:

The opposition between new and old forces, in class society, is the struggle between classes. It cannot be any clearer: the development in the history of society comes from people's participation. Of course, people cannot change the scientific principle of the progress of the relations of production. No reactionary can turn the wheel of history backwards. The facts all show that in the [the Qing dynasty] Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang were unable to obstruct the development of Chinese capitalism; Yuan Shikai... could not restore the emperorship and the Chiang Kai-shek traitor group and American imperialism could not protect the authority of the treasonous four families.¹¹⁸ Nor can any one person exceed scientific principles to create history, Sun Yat-sen fantasised about completing both the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in one shot, which proved to be impossible.¹¹⁹

Rong argued that none could change the law of contradictions in the relations of production arising from advances in the means of production. Neither revolutionary nor reactionary could speed up or slow down the advance of the methods of production and the progress of history.

¹¹⁷ Rong Mengyuan, "Geren zai lishi shang de zuoyong", 18.

¹¹⁸ The phrase 'four families' refers to the families which had monopolised the powers of the state and the economy under the Nationalist Party and the Nanjing Government. The earliest use of the phrase was by Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白 (1899-1935) in 1920, though it was most prominently used by Chen Boda in his series in the *Liberation Daily*, "Zhongguo si da jiazu 中国四大家族 [China's Four Great Families]", *Jiefang ribao*, 13-19 November 1946. Chen's work was republished in other papers and standalone pamphlets throughout the Civil War as well as after the establishment of the PRC: *Zhongguo si da jiazu* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1955).

¹¹⁹ Rong Mengyuan, *Lishi renwu de pingjia wenti*, 14-15.

Imperialism did not change the rules of history, nor the progression from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution. Rong thus implied that China was not unique and that Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's theory of the New Democratic Revolution was not necessary to adapt Marxism to China.

Not all historians completely abandoned Mao's master narrative of history and Mao's portrayal of Chinese circumstances as uniquely defined by the contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism. Jin Yufu for example, wrote:

The Revolutionary Alliance led by Mr Sun Yat-sen during the period of the 1911 Revolution stood on the side of the revolution, and its members were the leaders of the old democratic revolution. They toppled the Manchu Qing government and established the Republic of China, and while they had many shortcomings, these still count as revolutionary actions. As for the Beiyang military led by Yuan Shikai and all the other separatist military forces in the Southwest, they stood on the side of counterrevolution and were the greatest enemies of Mr Sun Yat-sen. Mr Sun Yat-sen engaged in a life or death struggle with these people, and this is the historical material we must organise for this period.¹²⁰

Jin argued, as had Mao before 1949, that the political battle between the ruling class and the revolutionary class defined Chinese history. In 1957, He Xiangning 何香凝 (1878-1972),¹²¹ a member of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party¹²² under the United Front Department rather than the CCP, drew parallels between the class conflict of 1911 and the

¹²⁰ Jin Yufu, "Guanyu zhengli jindai shiliao de ji ge wenti", 18.

¹²¹ He Xiangning was a founding member of the Revolutionary Alliance, associate of Sun Yat-sen and member of the Nationalist Party. A fierce advocate for women's rights, she joined the CPPCC as an unaffiliated democratic personage in 1948 and eventually served as Chairwoman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party.

¹²² The Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party (*Zhongguo Guomindang Geming Weiyuanhui* 中国国民党革命委员会) was founded in 1948 by members of the Nationalist Party that split due to disagreements with Chiang Kai-shek's leadership. It is one of the eight minor political parties recognised by the CCP, included in the United Front Department and represented in the CPPCC.

class conflict of the Anti-Rightist Movement:

Recently some anti-socialist rightist elements, under the premise of [the Hundred Flowers Movement call for] helping the CCP to rectify, have put forth absurd anti-CCP, anti-socialist, anti-people's democratic dictatorship views. Some of their lies are of the completely open variety, others have come in relatively hidden form, yet [the rightists'] direction and goals are all the same: to destroy the socialist enterprise and break the people's democratic dictatorship to steal authority; to destroy the Party and the peoples' unity; and to turn back the wheel of history and walk the capitalist road. These rightist plots bring back heartfelt memories and inspire us to extreme vigilance. Reminiscing on the revolutionary enterprise led by Sun Yat-sen, originally it was shining and glorious, yet still there were the rightist traitors such as Chen Jiongming 陈炯明 (1878-1933)¹²³ and Lu Rongting 陆荣廷 (1859-1928),¹²⁴ who stole leadership and betrayed Sun Yat-sen's Northern Expedition in 1923, temporarily interrupting Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary enterprise.¹²⁵

He portrayed Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary enterprise as a political event, led and betrayed by individuals, rather than as a movement created by changes in the means of production. To these authors, class contradictions expressed through combatting ideologies defined the periodisation of history. By 1957 and the Anti-Rightist Movement, Mao's master narrative of history, its periodisation of history and analysis of class had returned. As the Sino-Soviet Split began to develop and as Mao stepped back into a leading role, historians felt confident to criticise the Soviet model of historiography—and therefore the Soviet model of economic

¹²³ Chen Jiongming was a member of the Revolutionary Alliance and governor of Guangdong after 1911. Chen's views on federalism led him to clash and eventually fall out with Sun Yat-sen.

¹²⁴ Lu Rongting was a military commander and Guangxi ally of Yuan Shikai after the 1911 Revolution. Lu later allied briefly with Sun Yat-sen before infighting in the Nationalist Party isolated him.

¹²⁵ He Xiangning, "Min ge xuyao zhengfeng 民革需要整风 [The Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Nationalist Party Must Rectify]", *Renmin ribao*, 22 June 1957, 2.

development—and instead follow Mao’s master narrative of history, which portrayed the Chinese experience as unique. After 1957, Mao argued that China needed to find its own path for economic development and viewed prior support for the Soviet economic model as an attack on his leadership. Historians who followed Mao’s narrative of China’s unique revolutionary path led the persecution of colleagues who advocated for Soviet style historiography during the Anti-Rightist Movement.

V.B. Nationalist Education

In addition to backing the Soviet model of historiography against Mao’s master narrative of history, Rong Mengyuan and others argued that historical narratives could also impart national pride. By arguing that the bourgeois figures of the 1911 Revolution could serve to inspire a love of the nation in contemporary students, Rong also argued against the restrictive version of class analysis that emerged in the debate over Wu Xun and the evaluation of historical figures and which denied the historical accomplishments of the bourgeoisie. This debate developed into the far larger and more intense debate between data and theory after the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement. In one article, Rong wrote:

In the last hundred years, Hong Xiuquan through the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement... Sun Yat-sen through the Chinese democratic revolution and Li Dazhao 李大钊 (1888-1927)¹²⁶ through the New Democratic Revolution among other martyrs were all seeking national independence, democracy, liberty, and strength in their struggle against imperialism, feudalism and all counterrevolutionary evil forces, struggling their utmost to their dying day. They have given us a glorious revolutionary tradition, which historical science should particularly praise.... Our Chinese nation has

¹²⁶ Li Dazhao was a leading May Fourth intellectual and co-founder of the CCP who was executed during the fallout of the First United Front.

a glorious history of revolutionary struggle and national liberation.¹²⁷

Rong's disagreement with the evaluation of historical personages stemmed from his belief that many historical figures still had a pedagogical function in the PRC. The Chinese national history of revolutionary struggle was something to be proud of as a national accomplishment, rather than as the inevitable expression of class struggle. Rong appeared to know that this sentiment was vulnerable to criticism for being counterrevolutionary or rightist. In the same publication Rong defended his belief that inheriting national traditions was a valid goal of historical studies. Rong specifically argued that his version of national legacies was different from prior iterations of national legacies as iterated by reactionaries, writing: "Inheriting historical legacies is not 'protecting the national essence'. Prior to the 1911 Revolution, when patriotic comrades said 'protect the national essence', they meant restoring the motherland and opposing the Manchus; when the bureaucrats and landlords said 'protect the national spirit', they were telling exchange students not to cut off their queues, or not to study new affairs in the world—something counterrevolutionary".¹²⁸ Rong argued that historians should identify and promote traditions that were still revolutionary and protected the nation without being detrimental to the socialist project, regardless of class. In the article that his detractors denounced him for, Rong reiterated: "The methodology of Marxist science is to make concrete analysis from minute observation and a class viewpoint. In order to study post-1911 Revolution history seriously and diligently, I feel that we should first inherit the beneficial traditions of our country's historical traditions, and compile all sorts of genres of material".¹²⁹ Even as Rong credited the science of history as being a Marxist methodology, he argued that historical traditions should come first and placed the nation before class. This was a more extreme development than his previous position, one he may have been emboldened to voice

¹²⁷ Rong Mengyuan, "Aiguo zhuyi yu lishi kexue 爱国主义与历史科学 [Patriotism and Historical Science]", *Xin jianshe* v.4, n.3 (January 1951): 3.

¹²⁸ Ibid 15-16.

¹²⁹ Rong Mengyuan, "Jianyi bianzhuān Xinhai Geming yilai de lishi ziliao 建议编撰辛亥革命以来的历史资料 [A Suggestion to Edit Post-1911 Revolution Historical Materials]", *Xin jianshe* 1957 (7): 52.

due to the ongoing Hundred Flowers Movement at the time.

Rong's opinions may not have been deemed reactionary during the Anti-Rightist Movement had it not been for Shao Lizi 邵力子 (1882-1967), a leader of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party under the United Front and an outspoken critic of the CCP during the Hundred Flowers Movement.¹³⁰ In a Hundred Flowers forum for the United Front democratic parties, Shao Lizi said:

The 1911 Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen was a bourgeois revolution, this is correct. But this should only be pointed out in contrast to the CCP-led New Democratic Revolution; it does not need to be said usually. Originally, this sort of analysis and assessment of the 1911 Revolution did not look down upon the meaning of the 1911 Revolution, but when the youths are studying theory, and some over-adherence to orthodoxy exists, it is easy to diminish the accomplishments of the bourgeois democratic revolution, and think that the bourgeois revolution was reactionary and without meaning.¹³¹

Shao Lizi and factions within the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party, of which he was a member, were targeted during the Anti-Rightist Movement beginning soon after this forum. It is not clear if Rong Mengyuan had any contact with Shao Lizi, but both argued against the denial of the historical contributions of the bourgeois revolution and bourgeois historical figures by applying contemporary narratives to the past. Rong made similar points throughout the 1949 to 1957 period, but after 1957 Mao retroactively viewed the historical debates of 1949 to 1957 as challenges to his power. Rong's support of the Soviet historiographical model and for the educational purposes of bourgeois historical figures placed

¹³⁰ Shao Lizi was a participant in the 1911 Revolution and co-founder of the CCP then later a member of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party. He was targeted for persecution during the Anti-Rightist Movement and again in the Cultural Revolution.

¹³¹ "Zai Tongzhanbu zhaokai de minzhu renshi zuotanhui shang de fayan 在统战部召开的民主人士座谈会上的发言 [Announcement at the United Front Department's Democratic Personages Forum]", *Renmin ribao*, 3 June 1957, 2.

Rong in opposition to Mao, after Mao had redefined Mao Zedong Thought for the era of socialist construction.

VI. Conclusion

Between 1949 and 1957, historians used historical narratives to make political comments on the direction of the PRC. In both historical research and contemporary politics, Party and non-Party figures argued over the understanding of class analysis, the United Front, the periodisation of history and China's unique characteristics in the era of socialist construction. There was no, one, distinct 'correct' side to the debate over how Mao Zedong Thought adapted to the end of the New Democratic Revolution. Multiple interpretations of Mao Zedong Thought existed prior to 1949 and historians after 1949 all claimed to build on them, choosing the version of Mao Zedong Thought that best suited their political inclinations. During the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, Mao began to redefine Mao Zedong Thought as it applied to the socialist revolution. Moreover, Mao and many historians retroactively portrayed the historiographical debates prior to 1957 as a reflection of the political struggle between revolutionaries and reactionaries.

In 1957, just before and during the Anti-Rightist Movement, Mao Zedong began to clarify the nature of the socialist revolution and answer many of the questions which historians had debated prior to 1957. While Mao used historical narratives infrequently in 1957, Mao redefined the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought in his master narrative of history to argue against the application of the Soviet historiographic and economic model to China but for the more restrictive interpretations of class analysis that accompanied the Soviet model.

Throughout 1957, Mao analysed class along ideological lines; those classes that supported the CCP and socialism constituted the proletariat and those against the Party and socialism constituted the bourgeoisie. These two sides were, moreover, locked in a class contradiction.

This contradiction could remain among the people and non-antagonistic if bourgeois individuals acknowledged the leadership of the CCP and transformed themselves into proletarians. Mao argued that class contradictions defined all the past, present and future, and that Marxism would adapt to the constant emergence of new contradictions. Therefore, Chinese society was unique because China was at the forefront of the development of Marxism.

In his key June 1957 editorial, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People”, Mao stated how class was to be handled during the socialist revolution. He argued that during the era of socialism society could handle class contradictions in a non-antagonistic manner so long as the classes remained committed to the project of socialist construction:

During the bourgeois democratic revolution, [the national bourgeoisie] had both a revolutionary side and a conciliatory side. During the socialist revolution, it has both a side that exploits the working class and a side that protects the constitution and agrees to undergo socialist transformation.... The contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the working class is one between exploiters and exploited, and is originally antagonistic. In the concrete circumstances of our country, however, if the antagonistic contradiction between the two classes is handled properly, it can become a non-antagonistic contradiction. If it is handled improperly... then the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie could become an antagonistic contradiction.¹³²

Mao argued that in order to determine if bourgeois intellectuals counted as part of the ‘people’, “The main [two criteria] are to see if they truly desire socialism and truly accept the leadership of the CCP. They assented to these two criteria earlier, but now some want to

¹³² Mao Zedong, “Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti”, 1.

reverse the verdict; this is not acceptable. As soon as [bourgeois intellectuals] reverse their decision, they have no place within the PRC".¹³³ Mao believed that class conflict still defined the socialist era, but that the ideological inclinations rather than the economic standing of individuals determined their class, and that class conflict occurred in the ideological realm rather than in the economy. Class conflict, therefore, took place in the newspapers, literature and schools—especially in the history departments where many held to anti-Marxist philosophies.¹³⁴ Mao therefore argued against the economic class analysis predominant in the Soviet historiographical model, and instead defined classes according to their support of the CCP and argued that class conflict under socialism occurred in the ideological rather than economic realms.

Because Mao tied class to ideology rather than economic interests, any willing to adopt a proletarian world outlook could join the socialist revolution. In place of an alliance of classes under a United Front, the socialist era required all classes to transform into a single class: the proletariat. Mao remarked that the only way for intellectuals to earn a place in Chinese society was for them to become proletarian intellectuals.¹³⁵ Mao argued that over the course of the Chinese Revolution the classes that could join the United Front continually decreased:

During the War against Japan, all classes, strata and social groups opposed to Japan fell into the category of the people.... During the war of Liberation, American imperialism and its feudal-bureaucrat, landlord running dogs represented by the Nationalist Party reactionaries were the enemies of the people. Every class, strata and social group which opposed these enemies fell into the category of the people. In the present stage, the period of constructing socialism, all classes, strata and social groups that

¹³³ Mao Zedong, "Shiqing zhengzai qi bianhua 事情正在起变化 [Things are Beginning to Change]", in *Mao Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1949.10.—1957.12.)*, 267.

¹³⁴ Mao Zedong, "Zai Shanghai gejie renshi huiyi shang de jianghua 在上海各界人士会议上的讲话 [Speech for a Conference of Shanghaiese Dignitaries]", in *Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1949.10.—1957.12.)*, 226.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 229.

praise, protect and participate in socialist construction fall into the category of the people. All social forces and groups that oppose the socialist revolution and attack the socialist project are the enemies of the people.¹³⁶

The United Front of the bourgeois revolution only attacked the feudal system of ownership and the comprador capitalists, while the socialist revolution attacked the system of individual ownership: therefore, many bourgeois individuals would find participation in “the test of socialism” too difficult.¹³⁷ Mao acknowledged the shrinking of the United Front and that those bourgeois intellectuals who refused to transform themselves became the enemies of the people and therefore entered into an antagonistic contradiction with the people.

The change of period led to new class contradictions and forced the United Front to shrink, but most importantly, Mao argued in 1957 that class contradictions defined all periods: past, present and future. He saw no end to class contradictions and instead argued that, “Marxism can develop only through struggle.... True things always develop and appear through the struggle with incorrect things.... This kind of struggle is eternal and unending. This is the law of the development of truth, and is naturally a law of Marxism”.¹³⁸ Marxism never reached utopia, according to Mao, and would continuously develop through struggle to adapt to the class contradiction of each new period. This meant that the revolution needed to be eternally on guard since new counterrevolutionaries would always emerge.¹³⁹ Moreover, Mao’s opinion contradicted Soviet historiography as well as the opinions of his colleagues in the CCP:

The contradiction between the two roads of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is the main contradiction [in society], this is undeniable. Before it was anti-imperialism anti-

¹³⁶ Mao Zedong, “Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti”, 1.

¹³⁷ Mao Zedong, “Zai zuigao guowu huiyi shang de jianghua 在最高国务会议上的讲话 [Speech at the Supreme State Conference]”, in *Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1949.10. — 1957.12.)*, 241.

¹³⁸ Mao Zedong, “Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti”, 3.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 2.

feudalism; this has already been resolved. So now the main thrust of the socialist revolution is to eliminate the system of bourgeois exploitation.... The resolution of the 8th Party Congress... [said that] the contradiction is between the advanced social system and the forces of production.... The [previous] Second Plenum of the Seventh Party Congress pointed out that the fundamental contradiction was the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Looking back, this was entirely correct.¹⁴⁰

The contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat defined the period of socialism according to Mao, who spoke out against the previous consensus that the contradiction that defined the PRC was the contradiction between the advanced social system and the backwards forces of production. This contradiction was indivisible: Mao wrote that when speaking of class contradictions, “Main (*zhuyao* 主要) and fundamental (*jiben* 基本) mean the same thing”,¹⁴¹ meaning that no contradiction existed outside the fundamental contradiction which defined a period. Mao accepted the Soviet model of historiography that fundamental class contradictions defined the periodisation of history but refuted the Soviet and CCP consensus that class contradictions did not exist in socialist society. Mao instead defined class in ideological terms, arguing that class defined all periods and stated that Marxism needed to continuously develop to suit each new period.

Finally, Mao argued that China pioneered the development of Marxism due to China’s unique experiences in the revolution. China’s experience throughout the course of its revolution prepared the Chinese for their role. Mao said that, “Our China has always had two kinds of

¹⁴⁰ Mao Zedong, “Zhongguo Gongchandang ba ju san zhong quan hui zongjie shi de jianghua 中国共产党八局三中全会总结时的讲话 [Speech at the Closing of the Enlarged Third Plenum of the Eighth Congress of the CCP]”, in *Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1949.10.—1957.12.)*, 240.

¹⁴¹ Mao Zedong, “Zai ba ju san zhong quan hui shang de jianghua 在八局三中全会上的讲话 [Speech at the Enlarged Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP]”, in *Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1949.10.—1957.12.)*, 235-6.

education, education through positive [example] and negative [example]. Japanese imperialism was a great ‘teacher’, and before them were the Qing dynasty, Yuan Shikai, the Beiyang military, and then Chiang Kai-shek, all of them are our great ‘teachers’. Without them, the Chinese people would not have learned their lesson”.¹⁴² But more importantly, due to this experience, China developed its own path for the socialist revolution and therefore did not need to follow the Soviet model as closely as had been the case throughout the 1950s. Mao argued that the specific conditions in China allowed for antagonistic class contradictions to instead become non-antagonistic contradictions among the people.¹⁴³ Part of China’s unique path included the Hundred Flowers Movement, the existence of the democratic parties and mutual supervision between the CCP and those parties.¹⁴⁴ China’s unique experience necessitated a unique path. Moreover, Marxism constantly developed and adapted to new historical circumstances. Mao argued that Mao Zedong Thought and his policies—such as the Hundred Flowers Movement and the later Great Leap Forward¹⁴⁵—embodied the development of Marxism. The Soviet historiographic and economic model did not suit China because of China’s unique revolutionary experience and its development of Marxism. Furthermore, Mao interpreted prior support for the Soviet model as an attack on his leadership and encouraged the purges of the Anti-Rightist Movement to remove these new counterrevolutionaries from the historical profession.

The purge of Rong Mengyuan during the Anti-Rightist Movement¹⁴⁶ and the redefinition of

¹⁴² Mao Zedong, “Zai Shanghai gejie renshi huiyi shang de jianghua”, 227.

¹⁴³ Mao Zedong, “Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti”, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 3.

¹⁴⁵ The Great Leap Forward (*Dai yue jin* 大跃进) was a movement between 1958 and 1961 to quickly collectivise and industrialise the Chinese countryside with the stated goal of surpassing the economic output of the UK within 15 years. The policies, largely pushed forward by Mao Zedong, led to famine, disaster and economic regression. The Great Leap was criticised as early as 1959 and largely scaled back afterwards, yet continued in some forms up to 1961.

¹⁴⁶ Rong was denounced in the *People’s Daily* starting in August 1957, and eventually criticised in a mass meeting of historians in October. Among the charges against Rong were plotting to restore feudal and bourgeois ideology, undermining the leadership of the CCP, plagiarism and wild ambition: “Pi zhe Makesizhuyi de waiyi fandui Makesizhuyi – youpaifenzi Rong Mengyuan shi shixuejie de pianzi 披着马克思主义的外衣反对马克思主义 – 右派分子荣孟源是史学界的骗子 [Wearing a Marxist Coat to Oppose Marxism – Rightist Rong Mengyuan is the Swindler of the Historical Studies World]”, *Renmin ribao*, 14

Mao Zedong Thought for the socialist era indicated to historians that support for the Soviet historiographic model, and defence of the historical and contemporary role of the bourgeoisie, were counterrevolutionary. The CCP tolerated the existence historical narratives that defended the place of the bourgeoisie in the socialist revolution prior to 1957, but during the Anti-Rightist Movement such narratives became proof of opposition to Mao, the CCP and the socialist revolution. The open criticism of the Party by intellectuals during the Hundred Flowers Movement showed Mao that thought reform did not guarantee the allegiance and support of the intellectuals. Mao's doubts about the ability of the intellectuals and bourgeoisie to be remade to support the socialist revolution were reflected in historical narratives, after 1957, which cast doubts on the contributions of the bourgeoisie to the historical Chinese revolution.

Mao, moreover, defied the established consensus within the CCP on the defining contradiction of the socialist period. Mao disagreed that the contradiction between an advanced superstructure and the backward base defined the socialist period, and personally rewrote the CCP consensus on contradictions in socialist society. After 1957, only those historians confident in the protection afforded them by their political patrons dared to contradict Mao's master narrative of history. Mao also split with his colleagues who supported the application of the Soviet economic model of development, and redefined Mao Zedong Thought to justify his search for China's unique path of socialist construction. Mao believed that China needed to develop its own path, not only because of the economic and political problems caused by the Soviet model of development, but to protect his own position from the effects of de-Stalinisation. Mao's redefinition of Mao Zedong Thought to focus on restrictive class analysis based on ideological lines and the refocus on China's unique revolutionary experience and

August 1957, 2; Jian Bozan, "Youpai zai lishixue fangmian de fan shehuizhuyi huodong", 7; "Zhongguo kexue yuan zhexue shehui kexue bu juxing zuotanhui – jiechuan Xiang Da pohuai minzu tuanjie de zhengzhi yinmou 中国科学院哲学社会科学部举行座谈会 – 揭穿向达破坏民族团结的政治阴谋 [Chinese Academy of Science Social and Philosophical Science Department Forum – Exposing Xiang Da's Political Plot to Break National Unity]", *Renmin ribao*, 19 October 1957, 4.

path, validated Mao's new policies, including the Great Leap Forward and eventually the Cultural Revolution. Historians rebuked Fan Wenlan for his attacks on the Soviet historiographical model in 1956, but Mao validated Fan's argument during the Anti-Rightist Movement, which enhanced Fan's standing in the historical profession.¹⁴⁷

The Anti-Rightist Movement did not end the debate over the role of the bourgeoisie in the contemporary PRC, but it did shape debates going forward. Mao's support for restrictive interpretations of class analysis in the Anti-Rightist movement paved the way for new debates over class analysis and its application to the study of history for the next decade. Moreover, during the Anti-Rightist Movement young historians and students learned to target their superiors. Party historians used the Anti-Rightist Movement and accusations of rightist and counterrevolutionary beliefs to advance their career interests by removing non-Party historians like Rong from their eminent positions in the historical profession.¹⁴⁸ Party historians not only paired accusations of counterrevolutionary beliefs with accusations of professional misconduct, such as plagiarism and personal ambition, but also rewrote the personal histories of accused rightists to prove their historical and contemporary opposition to Mao and the CCP.¹⁴⁹ Just after the Anti-Rightist Movement Fan wrote, "There are many young teachers and researchers of modern and contemporary history in the universities and research institutes. In seven or eight years this will slowly show itself in the profession".¹⁵⁰ The lessons these young researchers learned from the persecution of historians during the Anti-Rightist Movement indeed became evident eight years later during the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁴⁷ Wang, "Between Marxism and Nationalism", 102.

¹⁴⁸ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 620; Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "History and Truth in Chinese Marxist Historiography", 424-428.

¹⁴⁹ "Pi zhe Makesizhuyi de waiyi fandui Makesizhuyi – youpaifenzi Rong Mengyuan shi shixuejie de pianzi", 2; Jian Bozan, "Youpai zai lishixue fangmian de fan shehuizhuyi huodong", 7.

¹⁵⁰ Fan Wenlan, "Yanjiu lishi yingdang hou jin bo gu 研究历史应当厚今薄古 [Historical Research Should Focus on the Present Rather than the Past]", *Lishi Yanjiu* 1958 (5): 1.

Chapter 4 – The Rise of Restrictive Class Analysis in the Historiography of the 1911 Revolution (1957-1961)

I. Introduction

Mao was at his strongest between 1957 and 1961. After the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward to pioneer a Chinese path towards socialism and shunned the Soviet-modelled economic policies implemented in China prior to 1957. Despite the failure of the Great Leap Forward and Peng Dehuai's 彭德怀 (1898-1974)¹ criticism of Mao at the 1959 Lushan Conference,² Mao's leadership over the CCP was absolute. The purge of Peng Dehuai proved that Mao and his policies in the Great Leap Forward dominated China. Mao's loss of power after 1961, in addition to the failure of the Great Leap Forward and his fears of Soviet revision taking place in China, however, convinced him that the bourgeoisie would become reactionary like Chiang Kai-shek, rather than remake itself like Sun Yat-sen. This chapter shows that historians altered their historical narratives to follow the changing focus of Mao Zedong Thought. Debates among historians focused on how best to alter Mao's master narrative of history in the light of Mao's talks in 1957, and how to refine each of the themes of his master narrative—class analysis, periodisation, the United Front and Chinese uniqueness—for the era of socialism. Historians debating Mao's master narrative between 1957 and 1961, developed the method of restrictive class analysis: a focus on class background to define historical contributions and ideology, coupled with the application of contemporary revolutionary categories to historical narratives. Despite the clear political implications of

¹ Peng Dehuai joined the CCP in 1928 and was one of the most important military commanders from that time forward, taking major leadership roles in the Long March, War against Japan, Civil War and Korean War. He was Minister of Defence between 1954 and 1959, when he spoke out against Mao and the Great Leap Forward and was subsequently stripped of his position. He was publicly denounced and humiliated constantly during the Cultural Revolution, and posthumously rehabilitated in 1978.

² The Lushan Conference 庐山会议 was held between 2 July and 1 August 1959 to discuss the Great Leap Forward prior to the 8th Plenum of the 8th Central Committee of the CCP. Mao acknowledged the problems of the Great Leap during the conference and agreed to scale it back. The 14 July letter written by Peng Dehuai to Mao strongly criticising the Leap, however, put Mao on the defensive and led Mao to force the CCP to continue Great Leap policies and purge Peng from the CCP.

historical narratives during the time, historiography resisted polarisation.

During the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, Mao clarified his master narrative of history to support his policies in the Great Leap Forward. He was at his most optimistic in 1958 as China began to follow its unique path to socialism through the Great Leap Forward. At this time, despite the open criticism of the CCP by the intellectuals in the Hundred Flowers which showed the failure of thought reform, he still believed in the ability of the bourgeoisie to serve the socialist revolution.³ Mao believed that the resolution of contradictions, such as the contradiction between the bourgeois experts and the masses, could lead to the quick advancement of the Chinese economy and society,⁴ and was thus “determined to make the intellectuals serve the proletariat”.⁵ He believed that political work in the superstructure of society, such as ideologically remaking the intellectuals through service to the masses, could push China forward economically.⁶ He designed his policies to compete with the USSR, first to match the USSR’s goal to ‘leap’ ahead of the US,⁷ and later after the Sino-Soviet Split to deny Soviet leadership of the global communist movement.⁸ All of Mao’s policies in the Great Leap Forward applied Mao Zedong Thought to the economy: this included contradictions to economic problems and finding China’s unique path to socialism. Yet the failure of the Great Leap Forward and his unprecedented attack on Peng Dehuai began to erode Mao’s power.⁹

After the Anti-Rightist Movement, historians developed a method of restrictive class analysis that grew to redefine Mao Zedong Thought and Mao’s master narrative of history. Restrictive class analysis was developed from Mao’s words in 1957 and the historical debates of the 1949 to 1957 period. Historians who applied restrictive class analysis used a historical figure’s class

³ Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China*, 16-17.

⁴ Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, 74.

⁵ Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 143.

⁶ Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 192-196; Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 205.

⁷ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 17.

⁸ MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 2, 291-2.

⁹ Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China*, 65-66.

background to predict that person's ideology and contributions to the revolution. Restrictive class analysis also means—in the words of Wu Han—the “modernisation of the ancients [把古人现代化了 *ba guren xiandaihua le*]” by reading the contemporary fundamental class contradiction—the bourgeoisie against the proletariat—into historical narratives.¹⁰ Restrictive class analysis denied the historical contributions of the bourgeoisie to the Chinese revolution. As a result, historians denied the place of the bourgeoisie in contemporary China and justified Mao's policies in the Great Leap Forward, particularly the departure from the Soviet model.¹¹ The debates held among historians, between 1957 and 1961, reflected political debates during the period but became politically charged and polarised questions after 1962, when Mao began to react to his fears for the safety of his position and the socialist revolution.¹²

The history of the 1911 Revolution played a crucial role in the rise of restrictive class analysis. The central place of the 1911 Revolution in the debate over restrictive class analysis was partly a product of circumstances in that 1961 marked the 50th anniversary of the revolution. Throughout 1961, many conferences and scholarly forums commemorated the 1911 Revolution. The largest meeting was held in Wuhan,¹³ but other notable examples included the CPPCC celebration in Beijing,¹⁴ a September historical forum in Shandong,¹⁵ a dual collection of materials and remodelling of the Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (1875-1907)¹⁶ museum in

¹⁰ Dirlik, “The Problem of Class Viewpoint versus Historicism in Chinese Historiography”, 467-8; Wu Han, “Lun lishi renwu pingjia 论历史人物评价 [On the Evaluation of Historical Figures]”, *Renmin ribao*, 23 March 1962, 5

¹¹ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “Chinese Historical Writing since 1949”, 622; Wang, “Between Marxism and Nationalism”, 110-111.

¹² Dirlik, “The Problem of Class Viewpoint versus Historicism”, 470.

¹³ “Jiji zhunbei duo zhong jinian huodong 积极准备多种纪念活动 [Actively Prepare Many Commemoration Activities]”, *Guangming ribao* 光明日报 [*Guangming Daily*], 5 October 1961.

¹⁴ “Longzhong jinian Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian 隆重纪念辛亥革命五十周年 [A Grand Commemoration for the 50th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution]”, *Guangming ribao*, 16 September 1961.

¹⁵ Xu Yuan 许垣 and Bai Sishu 白丝术, “Shandong juxing Xinhai Geming xueshu taolunhui 山东举行辛亥革命学术讨论会 [Shandong Holds Academic Forum on the 1911 Revolution]”, *Guangming ribao*, 25 September 1961.

¹⁶ Qiu Jin was the daughter of a Qing official who left her husband and child from an arranged marriage to study in Japan and pursue a political and social revolution for the liberation of women. She was executed in 1907 after she and her associate were found to be planning an uprising.

Shaoxing¹⁷ and celebrations in cities across the country.¹⁸ Shao Lizi, who had been criticised during the Anti-Rightist Movement, was rehabilitated and chaired the official 1911 Revolution Commemorative Committee¹⁹ and a forum for participants in the 1911 Revolution.²⁰ The coincidence of the 50th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution helped push the history of the 1911 revolution into political debates at the time.

A key policy of the CCP, after the end of the Great Leap Forward in 1961, was regaining the support of the intellectuals for the CCP to replace departed Soviet advisors, especially in education and culture.²¹ Encouraging historical research was a vital component of this outreach. The CCP intended for the pomp of the 50th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution to ameliorate tensions between the CCP and intellectuals, alienated by the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement.²² The CCP also attempted to reach out to the historians of the 1911 Revolution who had been alienated by the Anti-Rightist Movement. The CCP encouraged historical research due in part to the growing Sino-Soviet Split, and a public debate occurred over the evaluation of historical figures after 1959.²³ During the 1956 Hundred Flowers Movement, Rong Mengyuan had called on historians to focus on the compilation of archives and primary sources, and called for people not trained in history to become involved in historical research.²⁴ While Rong himself was not rehabilitated until after the Cultural Revolution, the

¹⁷ “Zhejiang sheng zhengji dapi Xinhai Geming ziliao 浙江省征集大批辛亥革命资料 [Zhejiang Province Collects Many 1911 Revolution Materials]”, *Guangming ribao*, 6 October 1961.

¹⁸ “Wuhan Xi’an Chengdu deng chengshi renmin juxing jihui 武汉西安成都等城市人民举行集会 [The People Hold Gatherings in Wuhan, Xi’an, Chengdu, and Other Cities]”, *Guangming ribao*, 11 October 1961; “Shanghai Guangzhou Nanjing deng di renmin longzhong jihui 上海广州南京等地人民隆重集会 [Shanghai, Guangzhou, Nanjing, and People across the Nation Ceremoniously Gather]”, *Guangming ribao*, 12 October 1961.

¹⁹ “Longzhong jinian Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian”.

²⁰ “Minge zhongyang yueqing Xinhai Geming laoren juxing tanhuahui 民革中央约请辛亥革命老人举行谈话会 [The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party Invites 1911 Revolution Elders to Hold Roundtable]”, *Guangming ribao*, 9 October 1961.

²¹ MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 3, 90; Dennis Doolin, “The Revival of the ‘Hundred Flowers’ Campaign: 1961”, *The China Quarterly* no. 8 (Oct-Dec 1961): 34-41; Merle Goldman, “The Unique ‘Blooming and Contending’ of 1961-1962”, *The China Quarterly* no. 37 (Jan-Mar 1969): 54-83; Goldman, *China’s Intellectuals*, 19; Groot, *Managing Transitions*, 107.

²² Teiwes, *Politics and Purges*, 473.

²³ Pusey, *Wu Han*, 14.

²⁴ Rong Mengyuan, “Jianyi bianzhuan Xinhai Geming yilai de lishi ziliao”, 52

CCP supported the work that Rong had encouraged. After 1957, primary sources from the 1911 Revolution started to appear in abundance: including the compilation of memoirs²⁵ from many 1911 Revolution veterans,²⁶ the re-publication of newspapers from the time, collections of pamphlets and other works²⁷ and the editing and release of other local materials.²⁸

Throughout 1961, a series published in the *Guangming Daily* exhaustively listed 131 available sources, from diaries to newspapers, originating from the 1911 Revolution and the Wuchang Uprising.²⁹ Non-historians also found their way into the historical field: a group of elderly Sichuanese administrators organised themselves into the 'Red Elders' to write local histories of Sichuan since the 1911 Revolution.³⁰

Despite these attempts by the CCP to reach out to intellectuals, historical narratives remained tightly controlled and camps of historians divided by the issue of restrictive class analysis slowly emerged.³¹ Wu Han called for the independence of historical studies in multiple articles

²⁵ The CCP promoted the publication of memoirs of revolutionary and heroic sacrifice to teach the youth about dedication to the revolution: see Cai, *Revolution and Its Narratives*, 233-234.

²⁶ Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi quanguo weihuanhui wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui 中国人民政治协商会议全国委员会文史资料研究委员会, ed., *Xinhai Geming huiyilu* 辛亥革命回忆录 [*Memoirs from the 1911 Revolution*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1961), v. 1-8.

²⁷ Zhang Nan 张枏 and Wang Renzhi 王忍之, eds., *Xinhai Geming qian shi nian jian shi lun xuanji* 辛亥革命前十年时论选集 [*Selected Discussions from the 10 Years Prior to the 1911 Revolution*] (Hong Kong: San lian shu dian, 1962).

²⁸ Indicative, but far from exhaustive, examples of the publication of local materials and local histories include: *Hunan lishi ziliao* 湖南历史资料 [*Hunan Historical Materials*] (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1958-1960); Yang Shiji 杨世骥, *Xinhai geming qianhou Hunan shi shi* 辛亥革命前后湖南史事 [*A Historical Account of Hunan Before and After the 1911 Revolution*] (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1958); Li Yuqi 李玉奇 and Zhang Lei 张磊, "Guangdong diqu de Xinhai Geming yundong 广东地区的辛亥革命运动 [The 1911 Revolutionary Movement in the Guangdong Area]", in *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji* 辛亥革命五十周年纪念论文集 [*Commemoratory Collected Essays for the 50th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution*], v. 2, ed. Hubei sheng zhhexue shehui kexue xuehui lianhehui 湖北省哲学社会科学学会联合会 (Beijing: Zhong hua shuju, 1962), 496-518; Li Shiyue, "Xinhai Geming shiqi Dong San Sheng geming yu fangeming de douzheng 辛亥革命时期东三省革命与反革命的斗争 [The Struggle between the Revolution and the Counterrevolution in the Northeast during the 1911 Revolution]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1959 (6): 56-70.

²⁹ Yang Qiao 杨樵, "Xinhai Geming Wuchang shouyi wenxian shulue 辛亥革命武昌首义文献述略 [An Outline of the 1911 Revolution, Wuchang Uprising Materials]", *Guangming ribao*. Part 1, 10 May 1961; Part 2, 24 May 1961; Part 3, 7 June 1961; Part 4, 21 June 1961; Part 5, 5 July 1961; Part 6, 19 July 1961; Part 7, 2 August 1961; Part 8, 16 August 1961; Part 9, 13 September 1961. All appeared on page 4 of their respective issues.

³⁰ "Sichuan sheng wenshiguan laoren ding chu Yue Jin guihua 四川省文史馆老人订出跃进规划 [Sichuan Province Elders in the Research Institute of Culture and History Set a Plan for the Great Leap Forward]", *Guangming ribao*, 1 April 1958.

³¹ Pusey, *Wu Han*, 14.

between 1961 and 1962, as had occurred in the sciences to entice intellectuals to once again support the economic efforts of the CCP, but was not accommodated.³² One key reason was the split within the CCP itself. While most of the CCP pursued practical, organisational policies to repair the damage of the Great Leap Forward, Mao opposed these policies due to fearing the possible emergence of revisionism: a bourgeois reinterpretation of Marxism, which Mao accused the Soviets of following.³³ Mao's step away from the front line after 1961, and the CCP's efforts to rebuild after the failure of the Great Leap Forward, made Mao fear for his position and for the socialist revolution. Mao's fears led to his attempt to regain absolute power and forge a new, Chinese path to socialism with the Cultural Revolution.³⁴ The attempts to return to pre-Great Leap Forward norms of conduct and rectification, moreover, only hurt the Party by leaving both the rehabilitated victims of the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement and their accusers embittered and holding grudges.³⁵ Due to Mao's fears of revisionism splitting the CCP after 1961, historians also split into separate, politically polarised camps around the debate between facts and theory,³⁶ which developed from the debates over restrictive class analysis between 1957 and 1961.

The history of the 1911 Revolution played a crucial role in many political debates between 1957 and 1961 due to the prominence of the 50th Anniversary celebrations. Historians supported Mao's departure from the Soviet model, and his policies in the Great Leap Forward, by applying restrictive class analysis to historical narratives. Remaking Mao's master narrative proved difficult.³⁷ Historians agreed with Mao that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie

³² Goldman, *China's Intellectuals*, 25, 35-37.

³³ Harding, *Organizing China*, 199-201; Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 110-1; Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 254-5; Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 162-163.

³⁴ Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao's China*, 125; Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 152-153; John Wilson Lewis, "Introduction", in Lewis, *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China*, 4-5; Schram, "The Party in Chinese Communist Ideology", 171; Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*, 196; Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 3.

³⁵ Teiwes, *Politics and Purges*, 490-491.

³⁶ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "History and Truth", 431; Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 622.

³⁷ Gao, "Eclipse and Memory", 37-44. Gao argues that historians, even Mao, cannot just change prevailing and established narratives and instead build upon and around them.

and proletariat was non-antagonistic³⁸ but disagreed over whether the bourgeoisie could transcend its class limitations, or would need to fade away over the course of the socialist period. Some historians, moreover, defended their profession against the modernisation of the past in restrictive class analysis, despite agreeing with Mao's interpretation of the contemporary revolution and its path. Debates about restrictive class analysis among historians resisted polarisation until 1962, when Mao decided that opposition to his policies and his interpretation of the Chinese past and present equated to opposition to his position and to socialism.

This chapter follows the evolution of the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought—class analysis, the periodisation of history and what that meant for the socialist revolution, the ongoing role of the United Front and the lessons which the Chinese revolutionary experience afforded the world—in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution between 1957 and 1961. It shows how debates among historians over the interpretation of each of the four themes according to restrictive class analysis began separating historians into two politically opposed camps.

II. The Rise of Restrictive Class Analysis

The most important development in PRC historiography, during the years from 1957 to 1961, was the emergence of the method of restrictive class analysis. The method of restrictive class analysis means first, exclusively researching class background in the analysis of history and its figures, and second, the projection of contemporary class conflict and class relationships into historical narratives.³⁹ Prior to 1962, historians sometimes accepted one of these premises of restrictive class analysis without accepting the other. The method of restrictive class analysis justified Mao's policies in the Great Leap Forward and the Leap's departure from the Soviet

³⁸ Mao Zedong, "Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti", 1.

³⁹ This distinctly un-Marxist trend of attributing leadership of the historical revolution to the proletariat was also noted in studies of ancient and feudal history. Historians put undue emphasis on the role of peasant wars in advancing historical progress and the class consciousness of the peasants that launched them; Harrison, *The Communists and Chinese Peasant Rebellions*.

economic model. Historians involved in creating and spreading the method of restrictive class analysis used the example of the bourgeoisie and the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution to prove that the bourgeoisie and its individual members possessed limited ability to contribute to the revolution.

Prior to 1945, Mao argued that any class willing to fight against imperialism and feudalism could participate in the United Front and the New Democratic Revolution. More than just joining the United Front, however, Mao argued that through revolutionary experience, individuals could transcend class and remake themselves to progress along with the revolution, as Sun Yat-sen had done. In the struggle against the Nationalist Party, however, historians began applying more restrictive class analysis to argue that portions of the bourgeoisie could not join the United Front. After the foundation of the PRC, historical debates over the origins of the 1911 Revolution, and the evaluation of historical figures, reflected the contemporary political debate over the place of the bourgeoisie in the PRC and the shrinking United Front. Mao's speeches during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement encouraged those historians who applied more restrictive class analysis but still allowed for the possibility of the bourgeoisie to remake itself ideologically and participate in the socialist revolution.

This section looks at the two issues of how historians analysed classes and how they assessed the contributions of historical figures. An evaluation of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution on each topic shows that debates over restrictive class analysis defined historiography between 1957 and 1961. Debates over how to define and apply restrictive class analysis demonstrate that historians built upon Mao's master narrative to create restrictive class analysis. They did not reach a consensus on how to apply restrictive class analysis but did not begin splitting into separate, polarised camps until after 1961.

II.A. Analysis of the Classes in the 1911 Revolution

Between 1957 and 1961, historians used historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to debate how the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat could be resolved non-antagonistically. Historians who believed that the bourgeoisie consisted of distinct sub-classes argued that the interests of some strata of the bourgeoisie coincided with the interests of the masses, and that these groups could be ideologically remoulded to support socialism. These historians argued against the exclusive application of class interests to analyse the historical contributions of the bourgeoisie and, therefore, against restrictive class analysis. In contrast, historians who argued for the uniformity of class interests within the bourgeoisie developed a method of restrictive class analysis that exclusively applied class analysis to the evaluation of the historical contributions of the bourgeoisie.

In the years immediately after the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, most historians argued that China's unique revolutionary experience produced several strata of bourgeoisie, and that the big bourgeoisie was less revolutionary than the national bourgeoisie. These historians used historical narratives to support Mao's departure from the Soviet economic model by portraying the Chinese revolution as unique but also supported a less restrictive interpretation of class analysis. Hu Shengwu 胡绳武 (1923-2016)⁴⁰ and Jin Chongji 金冲及 (1930-)⁴¹ wrote that the most counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie was in fact "landlord-bourgeoisie". Hu and Jin wrote that, "Only by understanding that the newly arisen top level bourgeois elements had intimate links and common interests with the feudal powers can we understand why these elements, despite their dissatisfaction with the Qing dynastic government, still basically supported the feudal ruling order and so hated and vilified the bourgeois democratic revolutionary faction".⁴² Hu and Jin argued that the comprador bourgeoisie was an evolution

⁴⁰ Hu Shengwu joined the CCP in 1953 and was a historian at Fudan University after 1952. Hu became the editor of *Lishi yanjiu* in 1974 and joined the staff at Renmin University after the Cultural Revolution.

⁴¹ Jin Chongji has been a member of the CCP since 1948 and historian at Fudan University since 1951. After the Cultural Revolution, Jin became a member of the 7th, 8th, and 9th CPPCC.

⁴² Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji, *Lun Qing mo de lixian yundong* 论清末的立宪运动 [*The Constitutional*

of feudal powers into a new class, which explained why the class supported the continued existence of feudal power structures. Zhang Kaiyuan 章开沅 (1926-)⁴³ and Liu Wangling 刘望龄 (1935-1998)⁴⁴ argued that, “The comprador capitalists were cultivated by imperialism and were a social force which worked directly for the benefit of imperialism”.⁴⁵ Zhang and Liu argued that imperialism created the comprador bourgeoisie, hence it could not support the revolution against imperialism. China’s unique circumstances created different strata within the bourgeoisie, distinct from other revolutions. While the big bourgeoisie could not be remade to support the socialist revolution, other strata within the bourgeoisie that still shared some interests with the masses potentially could support the socialist revolution.

Historians reached no such consensus on the revolutionary credentials of the national bourgeoisie. Many historians argued that certain parts of bourgeoisie could join the socialist revolution because their class interests coincided, at times, with those of the masses. Liu Danian 刘大年 (1915-1999)⁴⁶ wrote that the bourgeoisie and the working classes were essentially opposed to each other, but that in the context of the 1911 Revolution, their interests did momentarily converge due to the pressure of imperialism and feudalism.⁴⁷ Wang Yisun 汪诒蓀 (1904-1972)⁴⁸ argued that unity between the bourgeoisie and the masses could

Movement at the End of the Qing Era] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1959), 13-14.

⁴³ Zhang Kaiyuan is an eminent professor of history of particularly the 1911 Revolution. He taught in CCP controlled areas during the War against Japan and has taught in the Huazhong Normal University since 1951. He has written on the 1911 Revolution in both Chinese and English, and become particularly active in research and publishing after the Cultural Revolution.

⁴⁴ Liu Wangling graduated from Central China Normal University in 1957, likely as a student of Zhang Kaiyuan who worked there as well, and worked in the history department there until his retirement in 1992.

⁴⁵ Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling, “Cong Xinhai Geming kan minzu zichanjieji de xingge 从辛亥革命看民族资产阶级的性格 [Looking at the Characteristics of the National Bourgeoisie Based on the 1911 Revolution]”, in *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji 辛亥革命五十周年纪念论文集 [Commemoratory Collected Essays for the 50th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution]*, v. 1, ed. Hubei sheng zhexue shehui kexue xuehui lianhehui 湖北省哲学社会科学学会联合会 (Beijing: Zhong hua shuju, 1962), 49-51.

⁴⁶ Liu Danian joined the CCP in 1938 and studied at the CCP’s schools in Yan’an, then after 1949 worked in various positions in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He was sent to labour in the villages during the Cultural Revolution but rehabilitated in 1978.

⁴⁷ Liu Danian, “Xinhai Geming yu fan Man wenti 辛亥革命与反满问题 [The 1911 Revolution and the Question of Anti-Manchuism]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1961 (5): 8-9.

⁴⁸ Wang Yisun was a historian at Hunan University from 1949-1953 and later invited by Li Da to join the

even be created indirectly; although the bourgeoisie did not go to the villages to organise the peasants, it created ties to the peasantry through the secret societies and new armies.⁴⁹ Shao Xunzheng 邵循正 (1909-1972)⁵⁰ wrote that the bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution, but that when the interests of the bourgeoisie and masses converged, the bourgeoisie could help influence history.⁵¹ Finally, Xiong Kewu 熊克武 (1885-1970)⁵² wrote that, “While the 1911 Revolution failed, during the *longue durée* of our history, it was the first to disclose and oppose feudal exploitation, to develop national capital and a land program, to end over two-thousand years of absolute monarchy, to destroy over two-hundred years of the national imprisonment by the Qing dynasty, to raise the Chinese people’s democratic consciousness and to advance the Chinese people’s revolutionary struggle”.⁵³ The historians quoted in this section argued for the non-antagonistic resolution of the contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These historians also pointed out that other historians applying the method of restrictive class analysis made no attempt to understand or contextualise the accomplishments of the 1911 Revolution. While simultaneously arguing that the bourgeoisie needed undergo reform to participate in the socialist revolution, these historians also argued against the exclusive application of class analysis to understand the interests and contributions of classes. According to these historians the analysis of class

staff Wuhan University as a professor after 1953.

⁴⁹ Wang Yisun, “Xinhai Geming shiqi zichanjieji yu nongmin de guanxi wenti 辛亥革命时期资产阶级与农民的关系问题 [The Problem of the Relationship between the Bourgeoisie and the Peasantry during the 1911 Revolution Period]”, in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 125.

⁵⁰ Shao Xunzheng spent many of his early years abroad and became professor of history at Qinghua University in 1946, moving to Peking University in 1952. He continued researching and writing history even into the Cultural Revolution when he died of natural causes.

⁵¹ Shao Xunzheng, “Wuxu Weixin yundong de jiji yiyi 戊戌维新运动的积极意义 [The Positive Significance of the Hundred Days Reform]”, *Guangming ribao*, 29 September 1958.

⁵² Xiong Kewu was a member of the Revolutionary Alliance who defended Yuan Shikai during the Second Revolution in 1913. He was the effective ruler of Sichuan as warlord from 1918-1924 and re-joined the Nationalist Party afterwards. After 1949 he became a member of the CPPCC and the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party.

⁵³ Xiong Kewu, “Renqing dangqian da hao xingshi mianhuai xianlie aiguo jingshen – jinian 1911 nain 3 yue 29 ri Guangzhou qiye wushi zhounian 认清当前大好形势缅怀先烈爱国精神 – 纪念 1911 年 3 月 29 日广州起义五十周年 [Remembering the Patriotic Spirit of Martyrs to Clearly See the Excellent Situation Today – 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the 29 March 1911 Guangzhou Uprising]”, *Renmin ribao*, 30 March 1961, 4.

interests needed to be contextualised into the history of the times studied.

Historians applying restrictive class analysis sought to support Mao's policies during the Great Leap Forward by arguing that China's revolutionary history required a unique road to socialism. One way they did so was to argue that the entire Chinese bourgeoisie was uniquely corrupted by imperialism and therefore incapable of contributing to any stage of the revolution. These historians, unlike other historians who argued against restrictive class analysis, made no distinction between strata of the bourgeoisie, such as national versus big bourgeoisie. Li Shu argued that because China was a semi-colonial semi-feudal country, the bourgeoisie could never establish an independent republic. Moreover, the imagination of the bourgeoisie was limited and incapable of devising another system suited to the Chinese revolution.⁵⁴ Cheng Qian 程潜 (1882-1968)⁵⁵ stated simply that, "The historical experience of the 1911 Revolution tells us that, during the age of imperialism, the bourgeoisie can never lead any true revolution to victory due to its own weaknesses".⁵⁶ Peng Yuxin 彭雨新 (1912-1995)⁵⁷ argued that the top strata of the bourgeoisie, "Were mostly bureaucrats or gentry, and had continued relationships with the top and middle level feudal rulers.... At the same time, to advance its desires for the development of industry, it advocated all kinds of reform proposals, requesting the Qing government to set a constitution which would give the top bourgeoisie a high political place. The compradors among the group moreover had entered into a marriage of pros and cons with imperialism". Peng continued on to describe the middle bourgeoisie as

⁵⁴ Li Shu, "Guanyu Zhongguo geming de fasheng he shengli de yuanyin – du Mao Zedong tongzhi guanyu Meiguo baipishu he Aiqixun gei Dulumen de xin he pinglun 关于中国革命的发生和胜利的原因 – 读毛泽东同志关于美国白皮书和艾奇逊给杜鲁门的信和评论 [On the Sources of the Start and Victory of the Chinese Revolution – After Reading Comrade Mao Zedong's Opinion on the American White Book and Acheson's Letter to Truman]", *Renmin ribao*, 21 November 1960, 7.

⁵⁵ Cheng Qian was a member of the Revolutionary Alliance and later the Nationalist Party. After the foundation of the PRC Cheng became Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Nationalist Party as well as member of the CPPCC. Already sick in 1966, Cheng was protected from criticism during the Cultural Revolution by Zhou Enlai.

⁵⁶ Cheng Qian, "Xinhai Geming de lishi jingyan 辛亥革命的历史经验 [The Historical Experience of the 1911 Revolution]", *Renmin ribao*, 5 October 1961, 7.

⁵⁷ Peng Yuxin was a prominent economic historian, first publishing in 1943, who worked at many universities after 1949.

the unstable level that could enter into an alliance with imperialism or feudalism if either offered to serve the economic interests of the middle bourgeoisie.⁵⁸ Peng argued that, while multiple strata of bourgeoisie existed, the entire bourgeoisie was one class that shared similar interests throughout all strata and would ally with any force that served those interests. All bourgeois individuals, no matter their specific standing in society, held within them the potential to become counterrevolutionaries due to their class interests. Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling wrote that the bourgeoisie supported Yuan Shikai after the revolution because the bourgeoisie “Invested in the revolution like a business opportunity, hoping that after the success of the revolution the investment would be repaid in double, or even in monopoly or other special rights.... Generally speaking, the economic ambition [of the bourgeoisie] outstripped its political ambition”.⁵⁹ Zhang and Liu argued that the bourgeoisie would support whatever force directly served its economic interests. Xia Dongyuan 夏东元 (1920-)⁶⁰ wrote that the ‘land to the tiller’ slogan of the Revolutionary Alliance did not change the nature of the “capital exploitation of employed labour in capitalism, and would in fact only speed the development of capitalism”.⁶¹ Even where the interests of the bourgeoisie and peasants appeared to converge, the reality, according to historians employing restrictive class analysis, was that the interests of bourgeoisie and proletariat were constantly in contradiction: no alliance could exist between the two opposing classes, even temporarily. The method of restrictive class analysis implied that the bourgeoisie could only ever pursue its own interests, both in the past and the present; and, therefore, the contemporary revolution could not trust the bourgeoisie.

⁵⁸ Peng Yuxin, “Xinhai Geming qianxi Zhongguo zibenzhuyi gongye yu gongye zichan jieji 辛亥革命前夕资本主义工业与工业资产阶级 [Chinese Capitalist Industry and the Industrial Bourgeoisie before the 1911 Revolution]”, in Hubei Sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 89-92.

⁵⁹ Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling, “Cong Xinhai Geming kan minzu zichan jieji de xingge,” 43.

⁶⁰ Xia Dongyuan has been a professor at East China Normal University since 1951.

⁶¹ Xia Dongyuan, “Lun Qing mo geming dang ren guanyu tudi wenti de sixiang 论清末革命党人关于土地问题的思想 [The Ideology of the Revolutionary Party Members on the Land Question at the End of the Qing Era]”, in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 318.

A final flaw in the makeup of the bourgeoisie was that it was afraid of the peasantry and limited in its ability to unite with them or engage in a United Front. Some authors argued that the bourgeoisie inherited its lack of respect for the peasants from the feudal ruling class. Li Wenhai 李文海 (1932-2013)⁶² argued that despite the attempts of the bourgeoisie to ally with the secret societies, it remained incapable of joining together with the masses and educating them while also learning from them.⁶³ Zhang Kaiyuan argued that the bourgeoisie's attempts to lead an "orderly revolution" stemmed from its fear of allowing the peasantry to progress the revolution into its socialist phase.⁶⁴ These historians narrated the contemporary contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie into the history of the 1911 Revolution to show that the heart of the bourgeoisie's inability to contribute to socialism was the fact that it feared the ongoing revolution. Historians both opposed to and advocating restrictive class analysis used historical narratives to support Mao's policies during the Great Leap Forward. Those advocating restrictive class analysis, however, held a more pessimistic view of the contemporary and historical contributions of the bourgeoisie. They formed this opinion from Mao's 1957 definition of class along ideological lines that denied the contemporary role of the bourgeoisie in socialist society.

Between 1957 and 1961, historians supporting restrictive class analysis further purged the historical contributions of bourgeoisie by arguing that the master narrative of Chinese history was in fact the story of the awakening of the proletariat. These historians portrayed the 1911 Revolution as a step in this awakening and eventual conquest of political power. Zhao Qin 赵亲 (d.u.) wrote in the major historical journal *Historical Research* that that the proletariat learned from the failure of the 1911 Revolution that only it could lead a revolution.⁶⁵ He

⁶² Li Wenhai joined the CCP in 1952 and worked at Renmin University after his graduation from there in 1955. He was sentenced to manual labour in 1964 during the socialist Education Movement and again during the Cultural Revolution. He returned to work at Renmin University after the Cultural Revolution.

⁶³ Li Wenhai, "Xinhai Geming yu hui dang 辛亥革命与会党 [The 1911 Revolution and the Secret Societies]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 173.

⁶⁴ Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling, "Cong Xinhai Geming kan minzu zichanjieji de xingge", 23.

⁶⁵ Zhao Qin, "Xinhai geming qianhou de Zhongguo gongren yundong 辛亥革命前后的中国工人运动

Xiangning wrote that, “The failure of the 1911 Revolution was the first to reveal the weakness and conciliatoriness of the Chinese national bourgeoisie, and it also showed the truth that in semi-feudal semi-colonial China no class other than the working class could lead any real revolution to victory”.⁶⁶ These historians thus narrated the leadership of the proletariat, and the CCP, into the past to validate the ongoing socialist revolution. Their narration also supported Mao’s requirement that the bourgeoisie and intellectuals serve the proletariat in the Great Leap Forward. This interpretation rewrote Mao’s master narrative of history as the story of the awakening of the proletariat, rather than the evolution of the United Front, a point I return to later in this chapter.

II.B. Modernising the Assessment of Historical Figures

The debate over the assessment of historical figures shifted significantly from the tenor which marked the similar debate during the early 1950s, and became a debate over the modernisation of the past using restrictive class analysis. Between 1957 and 1961, historians analysing the bourgeois historical figures from the 1911 Revolution considered whether variations within an individual’s background could lead an individual to be progressive at some times and counterrevolutionary at others. The separate sides of the debate represented the emerging debate about historicism: how to place the actions of individuals within their historical contexts, as opposed to the projection of the present onto the past through restrictive class analysis. Those historians in favour of flexibility for individuals within class boundaries argued that historians could not accurately interpret the past when viewed through the lens of the present. In contrast, historians advocating restrictive class analysis argued that little or no variation existed among individuals within classes and against historicism.

[The Chinese Workers’ Movement Before and After the 1911 Revolution]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1959 (2): 8.

⁶⁶ He Xiangning, “Jinian Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian 纪念辛亥革命五十周年 [Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution]”, *Guangming ribao*, 10 October 1961.

Several of the more well-known historians of the 1911 Revolution argued that classes determined the world outlook and the potential historical impact of individuals but that within classes, individuals had ideological flexibility. Historians who argued that an individual could be progressive at times and counterrevolutionary at other times, believed that individuals needed to be assessed in the context of their times and not in the context of the contemporary class conflict. Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji argued that Zhang Binglin's thought consisted of many different influences but that "Revolutionary democratic thought was the main content of Zhang Binglin's political thought." Because this revolutionary thought was predominant, Zhang could be considered ahead of his times.⁶⁷ Hu and Jin argued that the members of the bourgeoisie were all influenced by many pools of thought in China, given China's unique semi-feudal semi-imperial status, but individuals were influenced by different pools to different degrees. This afforded individual members of the bourgeoisie some ability to be more or less progressive. Chen Xulu arrived at a similar assessment of Song Jiaoren 宋教仁 (1882-1913),⁶⁸ writing:

There are two standards with which to measure his praise and disparagement: first, is whether he maintained revolutionary willpower and the policies of the Revolutionary Alliance; the second is whether he persisted in a revolutionary attitude throughout the times and maintained an anti-imperial, anti-feudal desire. Song Jiaoren's words and actions manifested these two standards to different degrees, so he was a revolutionary of the times, as well as a political activist. Yet this revolutionary was quite conciliatory, and as a political activist, had the flavour of a politician.⁶⁹

According to Chen, any commitment to the revolution ought to be lauded and acknowledged,

⁶⁷ Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji, "Xinhai Geming shiqi Zhang Binglin de zhengzhi sixiang 辛亥革命时期章炳麟的政治思想 [Zhang Binglin's Political Thought at the time of the 1911 Revolution]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1961 (4): 7-8.

⁶⁸ Song Jiaoren was a leader of the Revolutionary Alliance and a founder and first President of the Nationalist Party. He was assassinated by order of Yuan Shikai for his opposition to Yuan's presidency.

⁶⁹ Chen Xulu, "Lun Song Jiaoren 论宋教仁 [On Song Jiaoren]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1961 (5): 43.

no matter what phase the revolution existed in during that time. While Song Jiaoren wavered in his commitment to the revolution and became a 'politician' or counterrevolutionary rather than an activist and revolutionary, Chen argued that Song's later reactionary actions did not negate his prior revolutionary accomplishments. Hu, Jin and Chen argued for a historicist interpretation of bourgeois historical figures that placed individuals into the context of their times and acknowledged their historical contributions.

An opposing stream of thought among historians between 1957 and 1961 applied restrictive class analysis to the research of historical figures in order to judge them according to the contemporary class contradiction: the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Historians applying restrictive class analysis concluded that the bourgeoisie could not contribute to the socialist revolution in the contemporary PRC and, therefore, that historical narratives should not acknowledge the historical accomplishments of the bourgeoisie. These historians believed that any praise of the historical bourgeoisie hid praise for the bourgeois, rather than socialist, revolution. Wang Yisun argued that Sun Yat-sen, for all his progressiveness and outreach to the masses, still regarded the masses as tools rather than active participants in the revolution.⁷⁰ Yang Shiji 杨世骥 (1913-1968)⁷¹ wrote that Chen Tianhua 陈天华 (1875-1905),⁷² "Was limited by the historical circumstances of his time. He was not a class theorist: when he spoke of 'the majority' he certainly did not mean the wide worker-peasant masses; when he spoke of 'the minority' he only meant the Qing nobility and imperial court. Therefore, while he resolutely opposed monarchy, this is not proof that he held complete views on people's democracy".⁷³ Yang judged Chen Tianhua not according to the times in which Chen lived but according to the contemporary contradiction between the

⁷⁰ Wang Yisun, "Xinhai Geming shiqi zichanjieji yu nongmin de guanxi wenti", 141.

⁷¹ Yang Shiji was a historian and author who worked in the Central Bank of the Nationalist Government during the War against Japan and after 1949 as a historian of modern Hunan and the Jin dynasty.

⁷² Chen Tianhua was a revolutionary and member of the Revolutionary Alliance who committed suicide to protest restrictions placed on the activities of Chinese students in Japan, by the Japanese government.

⁷³ Yang Shiji, *Xinhai geming qianhou Hunan shi shi*, 96.

bourgeoisie and proletariat. At the 50th Anniversary Forum for the 1911 Revolution, Sun Zhifang 孙志芳 (d.u.) argued that Chen Tianhua could never exceed the circumstances of his time and class of birth: Chen would never have been able fully to understand the nature of imperialism nor would he have been able to ally with the peasantry.⁷⁴ To Sun Zhifang, the analysis of Chen's class background showed the limits of Chen's contributions to China's revolution. Wang Renchen 王仁忱 (1912-1968)⁷⁵ argued that the 1911 Revolution represented "the summit of [the bourgeoisie's] revolutionary understanding" and that the bourgeoisie could not contribute any more to the ongoing revolution. While classes "should not be criticised too harshly" for their pasts, Wang still argued that historians needed to juxtapose any accomplishments against the more progressive accomplishments of the proletariat.⁷⁶ These historians applied the contemporary narrative of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the masses to the past to support Mao's policies towards the forced transformation of intellectuals during the Great Leap Forward. The historians quoted in this section projected the contemporary contradiction, between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, onto the past.

The method of restrictive class analysis and narrating the past according to the class contradiction of the present changed the way historians assessed individuals and classes. Rather than looking at all the actions and writings of those figures and classes, historians argued that an analysis of the class background and interests of a group or individual predicted the behaviour of that group or individual. This changed the way that historians portrayed

⁷⁴ Sun Zhifang, "Chen Tianhua de aiguo geming sixiang 陈天华的爱国革命思想 [Chen Tianhua's Patriotic Revolutionary Ideology]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 2, 382-383.

⁷⁵ Wang Renchen was a historian at Beijing Normal University during the War against Japan, participating in the December 9th Movement, and a professor of history at Tianjin Normal University after 1953.

⁷⁶ Wang Renchen, "Lüe lun Xinhai Geming shiqi zichanjieji geming sixiang de xingcheng 略论辛亥革命时期资产阶级革命思想的形成 [A Brief Sketch of the Formation of Bourgeois Revolutionary Ideology during the 1911 Revolution Period]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 277.

previously heroic figures, such as Sun Yat-sen. The development of restrictive class analysis had a major impact on all the other themes of Mao's master narrative of history and of the 1911 Revolution, including the periodisation of history.

III. The Contested Canon of Periodisation through Class Contradictions

Between 1949 and 1957, historians complicated Mao's master narrative of history by examining the difference between main (*zhuyao* 主要) —short contradictions which defined an event—and fundamental (*jiben* 基本) contradictions—those which defined an entire period. In 1957, however, Mao argued that there was no difference between main and fundamental contradictions in the periodisation of history⁷⁷ to attack the Party consensus that the contradiction in the PRC was between the advanced social structure and backwards economic base. Between 1957 and 1961, historians used Mao's words from before and during 1957 to debate whether main and fundamental were the same. These debates over contradictions in the periodisation of history reflected contemporary political debates on how to manage the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat non-antagonistically. Those historians applying restrictive class analysis argued, as had Mao, that the fundamental and only contradiction of the socialist period was between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and they narrated this contradiction into the past. Other historians resisted the projection of the present onto the past, and used Mao's words from before 1949 to argue that the contradiction between imperialism and the nation was the foremost among many contradictions in China.

This section looks at two debates over the periodisation of history around the 1911 Revolution: the debate about whether multiple contradictions could exist at the same time, and the debate over which contradiction was fundamental to the 1911 Revolution. Each show how historians adopted and adapted Mao's words to present historical narratives that argued

⁷⁷ Mao Zedong, "Zai ba ju san zhong quan hui shang de jianghua", 235-6.

for alternative interpretations of Chinese society. Historians who argued for the periodisation of history according to fundamental contradictions between class interests defended restrictive class analysis and Mao's policies in the Great Leap Forward. Those historians who argued for the existence of both fundamental and main contradictions argued that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat was non-antagonistic. They favoured historicism rather than the projection of the present onto the past through restrictive class analysis. All historians used historical narratives to support Mao's policies in different ways. They adapted Mao's master narrative and the periodisation of history in different combinations drawing upon previous historiography and Mao's 1957 remarks on non-antagonistic contradictions. At this time, the debate over contradictions had not yet polarised into clear camps; as evidenced by the fact that some historians adopted part of each narrative.

III.A. The Number of Contradictions

All historians, between 1957 and 1961, defined the periodisation of history according to the resolution of fundamental contradictions, but not all historians agreed on Mao's equation of fundamental and main contradictions. Mao and all historians defined the fundamental contradiction as the struggle which defined an era. But some historians argued that main contradictions—a temporary contradiction that existed as an expression of the fundamental contradiction—existed as well and defined specific events and sub-periods within the longer era. Those historians who interpreted class analysis more restrictively argued that only fundamental contradictions existed, while those historians who argued for the existence of main contradictions argued against the retrospective application of contemporary categories of class to the past.

Many prominent historians and politicians argued, between 1957 and 1961, that one fundamental contradiction defined the periodisation of history. Chen Xulu wrote that modern Chinese history consisted of a single period defined by a single contradiction: the contradiction

between the democratic peoples of China against the reactionary-imperialist alliance. Chen noted, as had Mao prior to 1949, that while the 1919 May Fourth Movement split the period into old and New Democratic Revolution phases, the fundamental contradiction of modern Chinese history did not change.⁷⁸ According to Chen, until the fundamental contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism was resolved, no change in periodisation occurred. Shao Lizi said that, “The 1911 Revolution of fifty years ago was a revolution of major historical import and the continuation of the Chinese people’s epic struggle against imperialist invasion since the 1840 Opium War against Qing dynastic feudal rule”.⁷⁹ All of Chinese history between the 1840 Opium War and the 1949 establishment of the PRC, including the 1911 Revolution, belonged to the same period of history, defined by the fundamental contradiction between the Chinese people and imperialism.

Between 1957 and 1961, even the historians who argued for the existence of multiple contradictions in history agreed that one contradiction remained fundamental to the periodisation of history. They disagreed, however, with the oversimplification of the past and argued that main contradictions, or temporary expressions of the fundamental contradiction, could exist and create sub-periods within larger eras. The resolution of main contradictions advanced the resolution of the fundamental contradiction and created sub-periods within each overarching period of history. Moreover, the existence of main contradictions allowed classes in contradiction with each other, to work together temporarily. Li Shiyue wrote that:

The solution to the main contradiction for any given stage does not entail solving the fundamental contradiction for the entire course [of the era], and might... create certain circumstances for the solution of the fundamental contradiction. Some say the

⁷⁸ Chen Xulu, “Guanyu Zhongguo jindaishi de nianxian wenti 关于中国近代史的年限问题 [On the Problem of the Boundaries of Modern Chinese history]”, *Xueshu yuekan* 学术月刊 [*Academic Monthly*] 1959 (11): 47.

⁷⁹ “Jieshao Xinhai Geming yiyi he ge di choubei qingkuang 介绍辛亥革命意义和各地筹备情况 [Introducing the Significance of the 1911 Revolution and the Preparations Around the Country]”, *Guangming ribao*, 7 October 1961.

argument that the contradiction between the forces of the Revolutionary Alliance and the Qing dynastic government was the main contradiction of the 1911 Revolution leads to the conclusion that the fall of the Qing government finished the revolution. This is a misunderstanding caused by not separating the main contradiction from the fundamental contradiction.⁸⁰

Li argued that the contradiction between the Revolutionary Alliance and the Qing Dynasty defined the 1911 Revolution, but that it did not define the period of modern Chinese history. The resolution of this contradiction contributed to the gradual resolution of the fundamental contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese people. Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling argued similarly that the slogan of equal land rights and other radical proposals during the 1911 Revolution paved the way for the development of a more advanced ideology and raised the intensity of the revolution.⁸¹ In an article which summarised a discussion between many historians on the periodisation of modern Chinese history, Du Zongfa 杜宗发 (d.u.) reported that most historians believed that multiple contradictions existed at the same time. Du wrote that “while the contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism was the most important, under the specific historical circumstances of [the 1911 Revolution] period, it was not necessarily the main contradiction”.⁸² These historians advocated for the existence of multiple contradictions, both main and fundamental. The resolution of those main contradictions, moreover, did not always follow the direct path towards the resolution of the fundamental contradiction that defined the longer period. Historians such as Li Shiyue and Zhang Kaiyuan adopted Mao’s terms and accepted the importance of fundamental contradictions in the periodisation of history to support Mao’s policies but still argued for the

⁸⁰ Li Shiyue, “Xinhai Geming yu diguozhuyi 辛亥革命与帝国主义 [The 1911 Revolution and Imperialism]”, in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 2, 673.

⁸¹ Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling, “Cong Xinhai Geming kan minzu zichanjieji de xingge”, 11.

⁸² Du Zongfa, “Xinhai Geming shiqi shehui zhuyao maodun wenti de tantao 辛亥革命时期社会主要矛盾问题的探讨 [An Investigation into the Main Social Contradiction during the 1911 Revolution]”, *Guangming ribao*, 19 May 1961.

existence of sub-periods and main contradictions. Their support for the existence of main contradictions signalled resistance to the projection of contemporary narratives onto the past and to those narratives that argued that the contemporary contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat was antagonistic.

III.B. Finding the Fundamental Contradiction

Regardless of whether historians argued for the existence of main contradictions in addition to the fundamental contradiction, historians agreed that fundamental contradictions defined the periodisation of history. What each historian identified as the fundamental contradiction depended on how restrictively that historian applied the methodology of class analysis. The periodisation of history became part of the debate between historicism and the modernisation of history through restrictive class analysis. Those historians who argued that the fundamental contradiction of modern Chinese history was between the Chinese nation and imperialism defended Mao's master narrative as iterated prior to 1949. These historians, moreover, argued that the contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and proletariat was non-antagonistic and, therefore, that the contemporary enemies of the revolution were external. In contrast, those historians who argued that the fundamental contradiction of modern Chinese history was between classes within the Chinese nation narrated the contemporary contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat into the past. These historians argued that the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie was antagonistic and could only result in the elimination of the bourgeoisie by including this conclusion in their historical narratives.

To divide the discussion into two, distinct camps is somewhat artificial, given that some historians argued that multiple contradictions occurred simultaneously. As documented above, historians could and did fall into both camps. Historians on both sides, moreover, looked to Mao's words to justify their arguments. Those who argued for the existence of only

a fundamental contradiction, quoted Mao to say, “The 1911 Revolution was a revolution against imperialism”, while those arguing for the existence of main contradictions quoted Mao to say that the 1911 Revolution was a “bourgeois democratic revolution relatively more complete in meaning”.⁸³ Each attempted to follow the periodisation used in Mao’s master narrative of history and the developments in the historiography of the early PRC. Finally, all historians agreed that imperialism played a major role in the periodisation of modern Chinese history. While some historians looked to the opposition between China and imperialism as the only contradiction, even those historians who looked to domestic contradictions admitted the influence of imperialism on that contradiction. All agreed on some of the basic premises that defined the method of restrictive class analysis, yet still needed to refine the specifics through debate with their colleagues.

Some historians defended Mao’s master narrative of history, as iterated prior to 1949, by arguing that the contradiction between imperialism and the nation defined modern Chinese history. These historians also maintained that the contradiction between China and imperialism remained antagonistic during the era of socialism, therefore arguing for the non-antagonistic resolution of the contradiction between the domestic bourgeoisie and proletariat. Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji argued that while imperialism allied with the domestic feudal classes, those domestic forces became the tools of imperialism rather than a unique and separate contradiction.⁸⁴ Hu and Jin had argued that multiple contradictions could exist at the same time but also argued that only by understanding the fundamental contradiction of the period could one understand each event within the period. Historian Wu Yunnan 吴雁南

⁸³ “Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian xueshu taolunhui taolun de yixie wenti 辛亥革命五十周年学术讨论会讨论的一些问题 [Some Questions Discussed at the 50th Anniversary Academic Forum on the Xinhai Revolution]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1961 (6): 17-18.

⁸⁴ Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji, “Xinhai Geming shi ge diguozhuyi de ming 辛亥革命时帝国主义革命的命 [The 1911 Revolution Was a Revolution against Imperialism]”, in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 2, 646.

(1929-2001)⁸⁵ wrote:

The main contradiction of the time [prior to the Boxer Rebellion] was that between imperialism and the Chinese nation, as the spearheads of the Chinese people's struggle accumulated around the most dangerous and vicious enemy of the time: imperialism. After the suppression of the Boxer movement and the signing of the treaty of Shimonoseki, the position of the social contradiction changed and the main contradiction of Chinese society shifted to become the contradiction between the Chinese people and the alliance between imperialism and the feudal rulers.⁸⁶

The contradiction between the Chinese nation and imperialism was fundamental, yet main contradictions defined separate events within the larger period. Li Shiyue argued that "one should not conflate essence and form," meaning that historians should not assume that changes to the form that revolutionary activities took implied changes to the essence of the fundamental contradiction of the period. According to Li, while the bourgeoisie led the 1911 Revolution against the Qing dynasty, the form of the revolution did not imply that the essence of the anti-imperialist revolution had changed.⁸⁷ Dong Biwu 董必武 (1886-1975)⁸⁸ argued that the period of imperialism was not just a Chinese construct but one which applied to the entire world; the reason that the bourgeois revolution failed in China was because world history had entered the imperialist period.⁸⁹ Whereas countries like France and Britain experienced

⁸⁵ Wu Yunnan was a member of the CCP and a professor of history at Guizhou Normal University who published extensively on topics of modern Chinese history both before and after the Cultural Revolution.

⁸⁶ Wu Yunnan, "Xinhai Geming shiqi Zhongguo shehui de zhuyao maodun 辛亥革命时期中国社会的主要矛盾 [The Main Contradiction in Chinese Society during the 1911 Revolution Period]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 2, 683.

⁸⁷ Li Shiyue, "Xinhai Geming yu diguozhuyi", 663. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁸ Dong Biwu was a founder of the CCP who had earlier passed the county level imperial exams and joined the Revolutionary Alliance during his participation in the 1911 Revolution. He was a prominent politician in Yan'an and after the establishment of the PRC serving in many high posts, including Vice-Chairman of the PRC.

⁸⁹ Dong Biwu, "Dong Biwu fuzhuxi zai Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian dahui shang de jianghua 董必武副主席在辛亥革命五十周年大会上的讲话 [Vice-Chairman Dong Biwu's Speech at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1911 Revolution]", *Guangming ribao*, 10 October 1961.

bourgeois revolutions and the formation of republics, China could not successfully experience a bourgeois revolution due to the interference of global imperialism. Dong and the other historians cited in this section argued that class conflict within China, prior to 1949, such as the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the feudal Qing dynasty in the 1911 Revolution, was in fact a temporary form or expression of the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation. They defended Mao's master narrative of history, which identified the contradiction between China and imperialism as the fundamental contradiction of modern Chinese history, to argue against the projection of the present onto the past. At the same time, these historians focused on the interference of imperialism to also argue that the contradiction between the PRC and imperialism remained antagonistic, and, therefore, the PRC should handle internal class contradictions non-antagonistically.

After 1957, some historians periodised history according to the growth of domestic class contradictions and economic development. These historians argued that changes to the economic structure produced changes to the political superstructure. These historians argued for the primacy of economic contradictions in the periodisation of history by applying the contemporary contradiction—the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat—to historical narratives. These historians argued that imperialism affected Chinese society by influencing the political superstructure or impeding changes to the base rather than serving as the fundamental contradiction. Yang Shiji wrote that imperialist elements stunted the growth of the Chinese bourgeoisie and “broke down the productive lives of the workers, peasants and small handicraft workers”.⁹⁰ While imperialism played a role in attacking both the political superstructure and economic base of Chinese society, Yang periodised history according to the new class relations that resulted, rather than according to the cause of imperialism. Peng Yuxin argued that the growth of railways and other tools of transport and communication expanded the labour supply, broke down the natural, feudal economy and created the class

⁹⁰ Yang Shiji, *Xinhai geming qianhou Hunan shi shi*, 4.

base of the bourgeoisie that produced the 1911 Revolution.⁹¹ Wang Renchen wrote that the 1911 Revolution was, “the start of a countrywide great revolution under new social circumstances, with a new class base, including a bourgeois democratic revolutionary program. The new social circumstances meant the social emergence of China’s capitalist economy in the 1860s and 1870s and its early development in the forty years up to the early 20th century”.⁹² The 1911 Revolution was a part of the anti-imperialist struggle but, more importantly to Wang, the 1911 Revolution was result of the emergence of the bourgeoisie. Wu Yuzhang wrote that Sun Yat-sen found supporters during the 1911 Revolution, where he had not before the 1901 Boxer Rebellion, because of the growth in the bourgeoisie.⁹³ Liu Danian argued for a sub-periodisation of modern Chinese history which followed the ‘high tides’ of the revolution: the 1911 Revolution was the third high tide and resulted from the development of national capitalism in the ten years prior.⁹⁴

To these historians, domestic class conflict was not an expression of a greater contradiction between the nation and imperialism, but a distinct contradiction produced by changes to the economic base of Chinese society. If imperialism allied with certain elements within Chinese society it was because changes to the economic base of society created classes that benefitted from imperialism. These historians argued that the classes which allied with imperialism needed to be removed from society, lest they continue to imperil the revolution. These historians argued that the bourgeoisie must disappear, either through reforming or by eliminating the class, for the socialist revolution to progress. While historians like Liu Danian and Wu Yuzhang departed from the periodisation of history in Mao’s master narrative as iterated prior to 1949, they used historical narratives to support Mao’s argument that the

⁹¹ Peng Yuxin, “Xinhai Geming qianxi Zhongguo zibenzhuyi gongye yu gongye zichanjieji”, 56.

⁹² Wang Renchen, “Lue lun Xinhai Geming shiqi zichanjieji geming sixiang de xingcheng”, 260.

⁹³ Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai Geming* 辛亥革命 [*The 1911 Revolution*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1961), 2.

⁹⁴ Liu Danian, “Zhongguo jindaishi yanjiu zhong de ji ge wenti 中国近代史研究的几个问题 [A Few Problems in the Study of Modern Chinese History]”, *Lishi Yanjiu* 1959 (10): 35-36.

fundamental contemporary contradiction was between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

IV. The End of the United Front

The invention and application of restrictive class analysis to historical narratives led to the questioning and eventual abandonment of many of the themes of Mao's master narrative of history, most notably and quickly the theme of the United Front. This section covers the historiography of the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution between 1957 and 1961 to show that most historians between 1957 and 1961 stopped portraying the Revolutionary Alliance as a United Front. The complete turnabout in the evaluation of the Revolutionary Alliance by historians displays the shift to restrictive class analysis and the changes Mao proposed to the role of the bourgeoisie in contemporary China.

The United Front was one of the founding themes of Mao's master narrative of history and the policy most associated with Mao when he first became leader of the CCP in 1935. Mao justified his United Front policy, and therefore his leadership over the CCP and the nation, by narrating the United Front into the history of China. After the establishment of the PRC, most historians continued to narrate the United Front into the history of the 1911 Revolution to argue that it and the classes encompassed by the United Front still had some role to play in the ongoing socialist construction of China. During the Anti-Rightist Movement in 1957, Mao argued that the classes included in the United Front constantly shrank over the course of the revolution and only those that supported the construction of the socialist system counted as citizens of the PRC.

After the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, historians applying restrictive class analysis began to narrate the contemporary contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat into the past. These historians applied the conclusions of the contemporary times to the past. For example, they concluded that the bourgeoisie needed to remake itself and become proletarian rather than join a United Front with the proletariat. These historians sought to prove that the

Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution had not been a United Front and therefore that the United Front of 1961 was similarly unnecessary. As with the debate over periodisation, however, even when historians agreed on the primacy of class analysis in determining the classes included in a United Front not all agreed on the projection of contemporary narratives onto historical narratives required by restrictive class analysis. This section covers three different topics of discussion which marked the historiography of the 1911 Revolution between 1957 and 1961: the inability of the bourgeoisie to form or lead a United Front, the intrinsic weakness of the bourgeoisie and how historians portrayed the 1911 Revolution as a stepping-stone for the political awakening of the proletariat. Each topic addresses the portrayal of the Revolutionary Alliance to discuss whether it was a United Front and what the portrayal of the Revolutionary Alliance implied for the politics of the contemporary PRC.

IV.A. Friends, Enemies and the Creation of a True United Front

Between 1957 and 1961, many historians implicitly or explicitly denied that the Revolutionary Alliance had been a United Front. Hence, they denied years of scholarship that conformed to Mao's master narrative of history. These historians followed Mao's lead to argue that the bourgeoisie of the contemporary PRC needed to remake itself and become part of the proletariat, rather than ally itself with the proletariat. For example, Li Weihai 李维汉 (1896-1984)⁹⁵ praised the United Front as a treasure and a lesson learnt from the Chinese revolutionary experience, yet he deliberately excluded the Revolutionary Alliance from the list of examples of the United Front in action. Li argued that not just any class alliance constituted a United Front; the key to forming a true United Front was the inclusion of certain classes and the exclusion of others.⁹⁶ Other historians of the era argued similarly that the Revolutionary

⁹⁵ Li Weihai was one of the earliest members of the CCP, an early associate of Mao and an educator and administrator in Yan'an during the War against Japan. After 1949, Li served as head of the United Front Department and was named to the 8th Central Committee of the CCP in 1956. He went to labour in the villages during the Cultural Revolution, but was rehabilitated and he returned to prominence afterwards.

⁹⁶ Li Weihai, "Tongyi zhanxian shi Zhongguo renmin zhengqu shengli de yi ge fabao 统一战线是中国人民争取胜利的一个法宝 [The United Front is the Magic Weapon which Brought about the Chinese

Alliance was not a true United Front because it excluded the friends of the revolution: the peasantry. In addition, these historians argued that the Revolutionary Alliance was not a United Front because it included the enemies of the revolution: the comprador bourgeoisie. This section looks at both the issues of the friends and enemies of the revolution to show how historians defined the United Front after 1957 and argued that the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution no longer qualified as a true United Front.

Due to the application of restrictive class analysis, historians between 1957 and 1961 argued that conflicts of class interests prevented the bourgeoisie from allying with the friends of the revolution and, therefore, that the Revolutionary Alliance was not a true United Front. For example, Wu Han wrote that the lesson of the uprising organised by Xu Xilin 徐锡麟 (1873-1907)⁹⁷ was that only a United Front which included the masses and relied on their aid could gain success.⁹⁸ Any United Front without the masses did not qualify for the name. Shao Xunzheng wrote that the bourgeoisie of the 1911 Revolution never allied with the peasants and that, “No matter what sort of organisational method the revolutionary faction chose for liaising with the secret societies, the two [the bourgeois intellectuals and the masses] appeared united yet remained apart”.⁹⁹ The bourgeoisie of the Revolutionary Alliance failed to create a United Front with the masses because the interests of the two classes conflicted. Wang Yisun argued that the bourgeoisie not only refused to ally with and rely on the masses, but actively suppressed the masses during the 1911 Revolution. This weakened the revolution and empowered the counterrevolutionaries.¹⁰⁰ These historians argued that the only United

People’s Victory]”, *Guangming ribao*, 1 June 1961.

⁹⁷ Xu Xilin was a member of Zhang Binglin and Tao Chengzhang’s Restoration Society but refused to join the Revolutionary Alliance. Xu was arrested and executed for the assassination of a Manchu official and planning an uprising, for which his cousin Qiu Jin was also later arrested and executed for her part in the plans.

⁹⁸ Wu Han, ed., *Qiu Jin* 秋瑾 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 31.

⁹⁹ Shao Xunzheng, “Xinhai Geming shiqi zichan jieji gemingpai he nongmin de guanxi wenti 辛亥革命时期资产阶级革命派和农民的关系问题 [The Problem of the Relationship between the Bourgeois Revolutionary Faction and the Peasantry during the 1911 Revolution Period],” in Hubei Sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 107.

¹⁰⁰ Wang Yisun, “Xinhai Geming shiqi zichan jieji yu nongmin de guanxi wenti”, 140.

Front worthy of the name was a United Front which included the peasants and working masses. The bourgeoisie could, however, join and participate in a United Front that included the masses, such as the United Front led by the CCP during the War against Japan, the Civil War and the period of socialist construction. These historians supported Mao's assertion that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat was non-antagonistic and that the bourgeoisie could support socialist construction.

Opposing historians, however, also cited the history of the 1911 Revolution and the Revolutionary Alliance to argue that the bourgeoisie was a liability to the contemporary socialist revolution. A United Front could only exist when it incorporated the peasants but some historians added that a United Front that included the enemies of the revolution was not a true United Front. Many of these authors argued that the 1911 Revolution failed because the Revolutionary Alliance invited counterrevolutionaries into the revolution. Yang Shiji wrote that, "If the revolution is not brought to a conclusion against its enemies, the counterrevolution has a chance to be restored".¹⁰¹ The Revolutionary Alliance did not target the enemies of the revolution and instead invited them into the revolution, which led to its failure at the hands of Yuan Shikai. Wu Jiang 吴江 (1918–2012)¹⁰² wrote that the weakness of the bourgeoisie and its inability to differentiate friend from enemy allowed "feudal reactionary powers" like Yuan Shikai to steal the fruits of the revolution.¹⁰³ These historians blamed the failure of the revolution on the bourgeois leaders of the Revolutionary Alliance for inviting the enemies of the revolution to join the United Front. Therefore, not only was the Revolutionary Alliance not a true United Front, these historians also argued that the bourgeoisie was innately reactionary. These historians narrated the contemporary contradiction between the

¹⁰¹ Yang Shiji, *Xinhai geming qianhou Hunan shi shi*, 166.

¹⁰² Wu Jiang was a member of the CCP since joining in Yan'an in 1938 and a philosopher at the People's University of China. Wu also worked for the CCP leading internal journal *Hong qi* 红旗 [Red Flag].

¹⁰³ Wu Jiang, "Zhongguo geming duoqu guojia zhengquan de guocheng – jinian Bali gongshe qiyi jiushi zhou nian 中国革命夺取国家政权的过程 – 纪念巴黎公社起义九十周年 [The Process of Gaining State Power during the Chinese Revolution: in Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the Paris Commune]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1961 (2): 3.

bourgeoisie and proletariat into the past in order to validate Mao's assertion that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat defined the socialist era and that the bourgeoisie needed to become proletarian for the socialist revolution to succeed.

Few historians defended the portrayal of the Revolutionary Alliance as a United Front, as characterised by Mao's master narrative of history, prior to 1957. Lin Yanjiao 林言椒 (d.u.)¹⁰⁴ and Jiang Ping 江平 (1930-),¹⁰⁵ however, quoted Mao Zedong to criticise Wu Yuzhang's monograph *The 1911 Revolution* and showed that Mao had argued that the Revolutionary Alliance was a United Front organisation.¹⁰⁶ Lin and Jiang were among the few to continue arguing that the Revolutionary Alliance was a United Front organisation. Mao and his followers who defended Mao Zedong Thought no longer needed the United Front so they cast it aside. Mao judged that his goals of building his authority and spreading Mao Zedong Thought did not require the tool of the United Front after 1957. Instead of continuing to use the United Front, historians used historical narratives to argue that only the proletariat could lead the transition to socialism and that the bourgeoisie was the obstacle in the way of its realisation rather than an ally.

IV.B. The Weakness of the Bourgeoisie

Most historians between 1957 and 1961 used narratives of the 1911 Revolution to argue for the intrinsic and ideological class weaknesses of the bourgeoisie. Historians argued for the weakness of the bourgeoisie, in order to deny its ability to create a United Front and to validate Mao's policies aimed at remaking the bourgeoisie. During the 1957 Anti-Rightist

¹⁰⁴ Lin Yanjiao is a copyeditor at the People's Press and amateur historian who has published mostly archival or biographical works on history since the Cultural Revolution. He began his copyediting work in 1954 and was a friend of many of the historians, including some cited in this thesis, whose works he edited.

¹⁰⁵ Jiang Ping is a life-long professor of political science and President of the Chinese University of Political Science and Law. He was branded as a rightist in the Anti-Rightist Movement for his links to the Soviet Union, where he studied for some years, and was persecuted further during the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁰⁶ Lin Yanjiao and Jiang Ping, "Du Wu Yuzhang tongzhi de 'Xinhai Geming' 读吴玉章同志的 '辛亥革命' [Reading Comrade Wu Yuzhang's *The 1911 Revolution*]", *Guangming ribao*, 8 October 1961.

Movement, Mao argued that classes were defined by whether or not they ideologically supported socialism. Prior to this, historians had disagreed over what made the bourgeoisie weak: its class interests conflicting with those of the masses or its ideological shortcomings. Mao's remarks on the ideological definition of classes created a consensus among historians and they agreed that the failure of the 1911 Revolution resulted from the ideological weakness of the bourgeoisie.

Historians criticised the bourgeoisie for both individual and class-wide failings of ideology to prove that it was too weak to lead the revolution or create a United Front. Li Shiyue argued in his history of the 1911 Revolution in Northeast China that the leader of the local Revolutionary Alliance branch "was not a good revolutionary leader.... He was afraid of imperialism to the point that he tied his own hands and feet. Waiting patiently and blindly for the end, he naturally lost his own initiative while building the willpower of his enemies".¹⁰⁷ Yang Shiji wrote that the members of "the bourgeois revolutionary party... often could not bear the trials of the times. As soon as the revolution suffered a setback, they quickly became dispirited and lost hope and, in the end, chose different ways to 'awake the nation' through their deaths".¹⁰⁸ Rather than learn from setbacks or find new allies, Yang argued that the bourgeoisie lost hope and pursued useless ideologies and actions, or even adopted policies detrimental to the revolution. Wang Yisun wrote similarly of the anarchists prior to the 1911 Revolution¹⁰⁹ and argued that the assassinations carried out by anarchists impeded the development of the revolution by drawing attention away from the real solution of "relying on the masses to struggle against oppressors".¹¹⁰ The individual failings of the bourgeoisie—from bad leadership to mistaken policies—stemmed from ideological weakness. These historians argued that ideology defined the bourgeoisie, in order to support Mao's ideological definition

¹⁰⁷ Li Shiyue, "Xinhai Geming shiqi Dong San Sheng geming yu fangeming de douzheng", 67.

¹⁰⁸ Yang Shiji, *Xinhai geming qianhou Hunan shi shi*, 109.

¹⁰⁹ For more on the anarchists of the 1911 Revolution period, see Peter Zarrow, *Anarchism in Chinese Political Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

¹¹⁰ Wang Yisun, "Xinhai Geming shiqi zichanjieji yu nongmin de guanxi wenti", 143.

of class and his policies in the Great Leap Forward. They also argued that the bourgeoisie was ideologically incapable of creating a United Front.

Other historians argued that not only were the individual members of the bourgeoisie ideologically weak, but that the individual weaknesses of the bourgeoisie were representative of the entire class. These historians argued that the bourgeoisie could not lead or even understand the Chinese revolution because the ideology of the bourgeoisie, capitalism, no longer suited revolutions during the age of imperialism. Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling argued that the bourgeoisie would always split up into competing groups. The Revolutionary Alliance brought together different strata of the bourgeoisie under the banner of anti-Manchuism, but it fell apart due to different concepts of anti-Manchuism, competing organisations and regional sectarianism.¹¹¹ The bourgeoisie was weak due to latent fissures within the class and as such had no cohesive political power or ability to work in a United Front. Wu Yuzhang argued that anti-Manchuism served an important propaganda purpose during the 1911 Revolution but also that anti-Manchuism inhibited the development of democratic ideology due to its simplicity.¹¹² According to Wu, the bourgeoisie clung to simple ideologies rather than find ideologies capable of leading the revolution. Hou Wailu 侯外庐 (1903-1987)¹¹³ argued that the 1911 Revolution accomplished nothing ideologically; only the 1919 May Fourth Movement and the awakening of the proletariat had led to progress in the Chinese revolution.¹¹⁴ The ideology of the bourgeoisie was unsuited for the era of imperialism and thus the ideological failures of the bourgeoisie led to its political failures. Hou referred to Mao's periodisation of old and New Democracy according to the 1919 May Fourth Movement

¹¹¹ Zhang Kaiyuan and Liu Wangling, "Cong Xinhai Geming kan minzu zichanjieji de xingge", 27.

¹¹² Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai Geming* (1961), 14.

¹¹³ Hou Wailu joined the CCP in 1927 while studying abroad in France and later the USSR. He returned to China and worked for various journals during the War against Japan while also translating Marx's *Das Kapital*. After 1949, he became a professor of history at Beijing Normal University and a member of the CPPCC.

¹¹⁴ Hou Wailu, "Xinhai Geming qian zichanjieji gemingpai wushenlun sixiang de lishi tedian 辛亥革命前资产阶级革命派无神论思想的历史特点 [The Historical Traits of the Bourgeois Revolutionary Faction's Atheist Theory before the 1911 Revolution]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 298. Also published in *Guangming ribao*, 31 July 1961.

to argue, as had Mao, that ideological changes produced changes in periodisation and in the revolution. These historians rewrote the history of the 1911 Revolution to eliminate the history of the United Front and portray the bourgeoisie as ideologically incapable of leading the 1911 Revolution to success. Historians eliminated the history of the United Front to justify Mao's policies during the Great Leap Forward and his assertion that the bourgeoisie needed to become proletarian rather than ally with the proletariat. Instead, historians like Hou Wailu projected contemporary categories of class onto the past by arguing that only the proletariat held the correct ideology to lead a revolution during the era of imperialism.

IV.C. Proletarian Awakening and the Modernisation of the Past

With historians increasingly forsaking the narrative of the United Front and its role in Chinese revolutionary history, they instead portrayed modern Chinese history as the story of the awakening proletariat. Historians narrated the proletariat into the history of the 1911 Revolution to support Mao's goal of socialist construction and the ideological remaking of the bourgeoisie in the Great Leap Forward. Instead of supporting Mao's master narrative of history as iterated prior to 1949, historians removed the United Front and instead wrote a narrative in which the proletariat learnt from each revolutionary failure and grew ideologically and organisationally to lead the Chinese revolution. Zhao Qin argued that, "Following the successes gained by the 1911 Revolution, a new high tide appeared in the Chinese workers' movement.... Between 1912 and 1913 there were twenty-four strikes across the country, and the centre of industry in Shanghai accounted for more than ten of those strikes during this period.... What can be seen is that the workers' strikes had become more numerous since before the 1911 Revolution".¹¹⁵ The failure of the 1911 Revolution taught the proletariat to organise its own movement and to move beyond the bourgeois revolution. Zhu De wrote that, "[The 1911] Revolution influenced the high tide of the country's democratic revolutionary spirit

¹¹⁵ Zhao Qin, "Xinhai geming qianhou de Zhongguo gongren yundong", 4.

and opened a path for the development of China's revolution".¹¹⁶ Wu Yuzhang argued that the 1911 Revolution failed to end imperialism or feudalism but that the failure the 1911 Revolution taught the May 4th generation to find a new ideology—Marxism—to lead a more thorough revolution.¹¹⁷ Zhu and Wu argued that the failure of the 1911 Revolution proved the failure of bourgeois ideology and the need for the proletarian ideology of Marxism. The 1911 Revolution served only as a lesson and step in the political awakening of the proletariat, rather than as a bourgeois revolution. Historians used this narrative to explain that only the proletariat could lead China, and to support Mao and the CCP's leadership over the country. This narrative left no room for the United Front, so historians instead portrayed the period of New Democracy as the era of proletarian awakening, not the era of the United Front against imperialism. They abandoned the theme of the United Front, which up until the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement had been a key component of Mao Zedong Thought. Instead, a new narrative and periodisation of proletarian leadership and awakening, founded on the methodology of restrictive class analysis, emerged between 1957 and 1961. Mao endorsed this narrative in 1962 and by the time of the Cultural Revolution, the awakening of the proletariat had become the central theme of his master narrative of history.

V. The 1911 Revolution and China's Unique Lessons

Narratives of the unique lessons of the Chinese revolution took on new life as the Sino-Soviet Split grew between 1957 and 1961. The Sino-Soviet alliance began to break down due to Soviet dislike of China's domestic policies in the Great Leap Forward and China's dislike of the Soviet foreign policy of *Détente*,¹¹⁸ and by 1962, the alliance had ended entirely. Mao believed that the USSR had betrayed communism through revisionism—the bourgeois perversion of

¹¹⁶ Zhu De, "Xinhai Geming huiyi 辛亥革命会议 [Memories from the 1911 Revolution]", *Renmin ribao*, 10 October 1961, 4.

¹¹⁷ Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai Geming* (1961), 24.

¹¹⁸ *Détente* was the name given to the easing of the hostile relationship between the USA and USSR beginning in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Several treaties and summits, particularly on the limiting of nuclear weapons, marked the period of *Détente*. Mao disagreed strongly with the policies.

Marxism to serve the class interests of the bourgeoisie—and feared the rise of similar revisionism in China.¹¹⁹ Mao and historians aligned with his interests used historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution to create and spread a Chinese model of socialist revolution to combat the influence of the Soviet model of revolution. Such historical narratives not only argued for the applicability of the Chinese model to the third world, but they also argued that the Chinese model would avoid the pitfalls of Soviet revisionism. Mao's fear of Soviet revisionism and his fear that the CCP would follow a similar path grew throughout this period and led him to implement drastic countermeasures against revisionism after 1962.

Mao justified his claim to lead the CCP in the 1930s and 1940s by using historical narratives to argue that knowledge of China's unique situation and history was more valuable than abstract knowledge of Marxism. By the Civil War, in response to the criticism of the Nationalist Party, Mao and CCP historians stopped applying the theme of Chinese uniqueness to historical narratives to instead justify the importation of Marxism to China. After 1949, the majority of historians no longer portrayed China's revolution as unique to support Soviet economic policies in China. Despite the purge of its adherents in the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, the debate over the nationalist pedagogical uses of historical figures between 1957 and 1961 bore similarities to debates on the same topic prior to the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement. In the context of the Sino-Soviet Split, historians once again debated the pedagogical value of bourgeois historical figures. This debate evolved between 1957 and 1961 to spearhead the debate between restrictive class analysis and historicism.

This section covers three issues in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution. The first issue was the lessons that the 1911 Revolution provided other developing nations. Drawing upon the emerging method of restrictive class analysis and the changes it wrought on the periodisation of history and the United Front, historians argued over whether the model of

¹¹⁹ Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 110-1.

proletarian awakening could be applied across the developing world. The second issue was the lessons that the 1911 Revolution provided to other communist nations. Historians applied a restrictive method of class analysis to argue that the threat of revisionism was not a deviation from Marxism but the restoration of power to the bourgeoisie who had been hiding within the communist parties of other nations. Third, some historians defended the nationalist pedagogical purposes of bourgeois historical figures to support China's disavowal of the Soviet economic and historiographic models.

V.A. The Chinese Model and the Third World

Between 1957 and 1961, historians argued that the Chinese revolution provided many important lessons that could guide other revolutions around the world. Some claimed that the Chinese revolution only inspired the global revolution, while others argued that the Chinese experience of proletarian control over the revolution was the only viable revolutionary path for third world countries. Historians between 1957 and 1961 claimed, just as CCP historians and journalists in Chongqing had claimed during the War against Japan, that the 1911 revolution had inspired the rest of Asia and the developing world. Li Shiyue wrote much about the impact that the 1911 Revolution had around the world. In a 1958 article, Li wrote that the 1911 Revolution "loosened the ground underneath feudal rulers" and had "awakened hundreds of millions to take part in political life" around the world.¹²⁰ He also claimed in his 1961 article at the 50th Anniversary Forum on the 1911 Revolution that the 1911 Revolution, "advanced the national liberation movement across Asia and began to show that the new source of the global revolution was Asia".¹²¹ Ding Shouhe 丁守和 (1925-2008)¹²² pointed out that it was not the Chinese who first pointed out the inspiration that the 1911 Revolution provided the developing world, but Lenin. Ding quoted Lenin to argue that the 1911

¹²⁰ Li Shiyue, "'Xinhai Geming huiyilu' (di yi ji) pingjie '辛亥革命回忆录' (第一辑) 评介 [A Review of '1911 Revolution Memoirs' (Part 1)]", *Guangming ribao*, 6 January 1958.

¹²¹ Li Shiyue, "Xinhai Geming yu diguozhuyi", 674.

¹²² Ding Shouhe joined the CCP in 1947 and worked in the CCP Central Organisation Department and in the Central Translation and Editing Department. He became an editor of *Historical Research* in 1961.

Revolution began the phenomenon of “backwards Europe and progressive Asia”.¹²³ Li and Ding refrained from inferring Chinese ideological leadership of the developing world and instead claimed only that China and the 1911 Revolution had inspired other developing nations. Historians made this claim once again due to the developing Sino-Soviet Split and the need to justify China’s departure from the Soviet economic and historiographic models. Other historians, however, went further to imply that the Chinese experience provided lessons and models for the global revolution in the third world.

Some historians argued that the Chinese experience could help guide the developing world’s revolution by correctly identifying imperialism as the true enemy of the revolution. These historians used the example of the 1911 Revolution to argue that the Chinese revolution had failed until it correctly identified and targeted imperialism as the principal enemy of the revolution. Wu Yuzhang used the example of the failure of the 1911 Revolution to argue that, “while imperialism is on a dead-end path, it will not willingly step off the stage of history”, and only through continuing struggle would imperialism be defeated. While the revolutionaries of the 1911 Revolution promised to protect the interests of foreign imperialist powers to gain their neutrality, imperialism would not allow revolution to threaten its position.¹²⁴ Yu Shengwu 余绳武 (1926-2009)¹²⁵ argued that imperialist powers would never leave a country of their own volition. The revolutionaries of the 1911 Revolution promised to protect imperialist interests in China, yet imperialism still interfered in the revolution. Imperialism was “always changing its approach” but at no time did imperialism change its nature and stop threatening the revolution.¹²⁶ Wu and Yu each argued that imperialism threatened the global

¹²³ Ding Shouhe, “Liening lun Xinhai Geming 列宁论辛亥革命 [Lenin on the 1911 Revolution]”, *Renmin ribao*, 8 October 1961, 5.

¹²⁴ Wu Yuzhang, “Cong Lumengba bei shahai kan diguozhuyi de qiong tu mo lu 从卢蒙巴被杀害看帝国主义的穷途末路 [The Exhausted Path of Imperialism as Shown by the Assassination of Lumumba]”, *Renmin ribao*, 21 February 1961, 6. Patrice Lumumba was a Congolese independence leader, Pan-Africanist and the first Prime Minister of the Congo. He was deposed by a military coup in September 1960 and executed in January 1961, less than a year after his election.

¹²⁵ Yu Shengwu was a historian from Qinghua University and head of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Modern History Research Unit who went on to be a member of the 7th and 8th CPPCC.

¹²⁶ Yu Shengwu, “Xinhai Geming shiqi diguozhuyi lieqiang de qin hua zhengce 辛亥革命时期帝国主义列

revolution in all its stages; imperialism caused the 1911 Revolution to fail, and it was causing contemporary revolutions around the world to fail. Other revolutions around the world needed to learn from the Chinese experience lesson of the importance of identifying and opposing imperialist plots. The model that Wu and Yu suggested that the global revolution should follow was ambiguous, however, and could mean either the model of the United Front of the New Democratic Revolution, or as other historians argued explicitly, the path of the contemporary CCP and proletarian leadership of the revolution.

Other historians who endorsed the contemporary lessons of the Chinese revolution according to restrictive class analysis argued specifically that only the proletariat could lead the global revolution. Rather than portraying the United Front as the lesson learned from the 1911 Revolution and the Chinese model of revolution, these historians argued that only when a vanguard party of the proletariat led the national revolution would it be successful. They argued that the rest of the developing world should follow the revolutionary experience gained by China after 1949. To do so, these historians applied the contemporary periodisation of the socialist revolution, and the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, to the past and rewrote histories of the 1911 Revolution to tell the story of proletarian awakening. Liu Danian wrote that all of the experiences of China's democratic revolution could be summarised in a single sentence: "without the proletariat and the CCP to lead the revolution, it failed, while with the leadership of the proletariat and the CCP it was finally victorious". Liu cited the 1911 Revolution as indicative of this trend.¹²⁷ Cheng Qian wrote that, "Only after the working classes became an independent class force and stepped on to the political stage, and especially after obtaining the correct leadership of the CCP, did the Chinese people's revolutionary enterprise begin slowly to win victories over internal and external

强的侵华政策 [The Imperialist Powers' Policy of Invading China during the 1911 Revolution Period]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 257-258.

¹²⁷ Liu Danian, "Women yao shuxi Zhongguo jindai shi 我们要熟悉中国近代史 [We Should Familiarise Ourselves with Modern Chinese history]", *Renmin ribao*, 21 February 1961, 7.

enemies... The historical experience of the 1911 Revolution tells us that the force of the masses is the true, great force that creates history".¹²⁸ Liu and Cheng argued that only the proletariat could lead the revolution to fruition and endorsed the new methodology of restrictive class analysis. The model of revolution that China offered the world was the model of the sole leadership of the proletariat through a vanguard, communist party. They retrospectively applied contemporary categories to the past by applying the narrative of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat to the history of the 1911 Revolution, thus validating their claims that proletarian leadership had saved China and could save other developing nations.

V.B. China's Revolution as a Safeguard against Soviet Revisionism

Between 1957 and 1961, historians argued that the historical experience of the Chinese revolution, and particularly the experience of the 1911 Revolution, taught the socialist world to be wary of bourgeois elements still hidden within each nation. According to Mao, revisionism was not an ideological perversion of communism but a manifestation of bourgeois ideology resulting from hidden bourgeois elements taking over a communist party. The implication of Mao's remarks on class during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, and the method of restrictive class analysis that evolved from his 1957 remarks, was that class determined ideology. Any that supported the CCP were members of the proletariat, and conversely, the proletariat necessarily supported the CCP; any that opposed the CCP were members of the bourgeoisie, which was always counterrevolutionary. Thus, they concluded that the rise of revisionism in the Soviet Union meant that the Soviets had allowed the bourgeoisie to take over the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Historians narrated this conclusion into the history of the 1911 Revolution to show that the bourgeoisie could never be trusted; it could hide within the revolutionary ranks and betray the revolution.

¹²⁸ Cheng Qian, "Xinhai Geming de lishi jingyan", 7.

The essential problem of revisionism, as presented by historians of the 1911 Revolution, was that the bourgeoisie would do anything to protect its power, including joining the revolution and feigning socialism. Historians applied restrictive class analysis to define classes according to ideology, so any elements advocating revisionism must necessarily be bourgeois elements. Revisionism was not an ideological issue but a class issue: revisionists were bourgeois elements in socialist clothing. Tan Bi'an 谭彼岸 (d.u.)¹²⁹ wrote that Lenin had predicted that some elements of the bourgeoisie would advocate watered down versions of socialism in order to prevent the socialist revolution from occurring. Tan argued that the Chinese bourgeois intellectuals of the 1911 Revolution had attempted to take this path and preserve their gains by incorporating aspects of socialism into their revolutionary program.¹³⁰ The bourgeoisie invented weak versions of socialism to prevent the seizure of power by the proletariat and the implementation of real socialism. Xia Dongyuan argued that, "the bourgeois revolutionaries [of the 1911 Revolution] attempted to solve the land problem and establish 'equality' and 'socialism' in order to prevent a second revolution. The essence of this theory was... forever to protect the ruling position of the bourgeoisie after the revolution".¹³¹ These authors argued that to preserve its power the bourgeoisie had been faking socialism and empathy for the masses since the 1911 Revolution, and possibly before. It should therefore come as no surprise that the bourgeoisie would continue to simulate support for socialist policies even after the socialist revolution. The proletariat, therefore, needed to protect the class purity of the revolution to ensure its ideological purity. Historians used historical narratives to define the sources of revisionism and, thereby, attack the USSR and its policies. These narratives validated both China's domestic and foreign policies as the PRC drifted away from Soviet economic policies and the Sino-Soviet alliance.

¹²⁹ Tan Bi'an was a historian who published largely on economic history and Marxist theory from the 1930s through to the 1950s.

¹³⁰ Tan Bi'an, "Eguo mincuizhuyi dui Tongmenghui de yingxiang 俄国民粹主义对同盟会的影响 [The Influence of Russian Narodnikism on the Revolutionary Alliance]", *Lishi Yanjiu* 1959 (1): 35.

¹³¹ Xia Dongyuan, "Lun Qing mo geming dang ren guanyu tudi wenti de sixiang", 320.

The portrayal of Sun Yat-sen as a revisionist by historians, after 1957, epitomised the argument that ideology defined class and, therefore, that the socialist revolution must ensure class and ideological purity. Sun Yat-sen was, as portrayed in Mao's master narrative prior to 1949, a paragon of revolutionary will and an example of how individuals could remake themselves to join new revolutions. By 1961, however, most historians argued that Sun's proto-socialism was an expression of his bourgeois ideology and class background. Zhao Qin wrote that the source of Sun's proto-socialist thought was not the sources of Marxism-Leninism, but the Western bourgeoisie. Sun learned from the bourgeoisie of the West, which itself was trying to avoid the socialist revolution, and applied those lessons to his plan for China.¹³² Ding Shouhe argued that, "Sun Yat-sen's nationalism... reflected his distaste for the Western capitalist system and his sympathy for the workers, but... was a dream of the bourgeoisie".¹³³ Sun Yat-sen's desire to combine the bourgeois and socialist revolutions was a bourgeois dream inherited from the West. The progressiveness for which historians praised Sun throughout the 1940s was instead portrayed, through the lens of restrictive class analysis, as a product of Sun's class background and ideology. The 1911 Revolution and the example of Sun Yat-sen demonstrated that the bourgeoisie was capable of faking socialism to protect its ruling status. The rise of revisionism, therefore, was the rise to power of the bourgeoisie within a communist party. Neither Sun Yat-sen nor Chiang Kai-shek could remake themselves into proletarians and instead acted in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and therefore the class was an enemy rather than an ally during the socialist era.

The battleground of the socialist revolution was not just in armed conflict around the world but in the hearts and minds of the masses. The bourgeoisie was an ever-present threat lurking within the revolution and all culture and history could be an ideological battleground between classes contesting the leadership of the revolution. Since Mao and historians, applying

¹³² Zhao Qin, "Xinhai geming qianhou de Zhongguo gongren yundong", 6.

¹³³ Ding Shouhe, "Liening lun Xinhai Geming", 5.

restrictive class analysis, defined class according to ideology, the defeat of bourgeois ideology meant the defeat of the class and the prevention of revisionism. During the Great Leap Forward, Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji claimed that, “Some bourgeois rightists... still today attempt to explain that their reactionary histories of reformist political activities were really progressive in order to fool those who do not understand the reality of history”.¹³⁴ Hu and Jin argued that some historians distorted history not only to spread bourgeois ideology in China, but also to cover up the truth of their own counterrevolutionary misdeeds. Zhang Xiluo 张西洛 (d.u.)¹³⁵ used the example of braid-cutting during the 1911 Revolution¹³⁶ to argue that people during the Great Leap Forward had a “bourgeois braid on themselves” which needed to be cut as well.¹³⁷ Zhang argued that bourgeois ideology and bourgeois elements continued to hamper China’s progress towards socialism and that only by completely purging bourgeois influence could China complete its Great Leap to socialist society. Revisionism was both an ideology and a hidden bourgeois class force holding back the Chinese and global revolutions. Mao and the historians who supported him argued that the CCP created a model of revolution that could control the threat of revisionism. Historians applied contemporary narratives the history of the 1911 Revolution to show the danger of revisionism and the need for purity of revolutionary leadership. They did this in order to support Mao’s abandonment of the Soviet model and the policies that led to the Sino-Soviet Split.

V.C. Nationalism and the Defence against the Modernisation of the Past

While historians debated what lessons China’s revolutionary experience had provided to the

¹³⁴ Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji, *Lun Qing mo de lixian yundong*, 62.

¹³⁵ Zhang Xiluo joined the CCP in 1938 and was the editor of many papers, including the *Guangming Daily*, before and after the foundation of the PRC. His published interview of Mao Zedong during the War against Japan helped spread the popularity of Mao and the CCP at the time.

¹³⁶ The braided hairstyle, or queue (*bianzi* 辫子), was the traditional hairstyle of the Manchu people that the Qing dynasty forced all Chinese men to wear after their conquest of China. Cutting off one’s braid became a symbol of resistance to the Qing dynasty and of the 1911 Revolution. For more on the queue, see Phillip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹³⁷ Zhang Xiluo, “Jidong renxin de fayan 激动人心的发言 [A Speech to Liven the Heart]”, *Guangming ribao*, 8 March 1958.

developing and communist worlds, some historians looked to the unique lessons learned from China and continued to advocate the nationalist pedagogical uses of history. After 1957, most historians supported the nationalist pedagogical uses of history as a rejection of the Soviet historiographical method. As such, these historians brought Mao's theme of Chinese uniqueness to back to their historical narratives to support Mao's new goals and reassert China's independence from the Soviet model. A debate began, however, over whether historians should include all Chinese history in the aggrandisement of China or if only the history of classes relevant to the contemporary revolution could serve nationalist pedagogical purposes. The debate over the nationalist pedagogical uses of bourgeois historical figures turned into the fierce debate between facts and theory, or historicism versus the modernisation of the past. It led to the persecution of some historians during the Cultural Revolution.

Despite the purge of many proponents of nationalist history during the Anti-Rightist Movement, many historians supported the nationalist pedagogical uses of history. The most prominent historians between 1957 and 1961 chose to focus on the patriotic value of history to assert China's independence from the Soviet economic and historiographical models. Moreover, they defended the history of the Chinese revolution from the imposition of contemporary narratives onto the past by restrictive class analysis. Wu Han wrote that despite Qiu Jin's feudal background, Qiu's life was a heroic one still of pedagogical value and inspiration to the masses.¹³⁸ Qiu fought for the revolution and overcame her class background to play a role in progressing China's revolution, which made her a notable historical figure and useful for nationalist education. Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji wrote that, "China is a nation which has existed for a long time in an intensely fierce anti-imperial struggle, and the Chinese people have never once exhibited any fear or submission in the face of imperialist invasion and

¹³⁸ Wu Han, *Qiu Jin*, 1.

oppression".¹³⁹ Hu and Jin argued that the fight against imperialism had been a patriotic fight to save the nation, and that the long tradition of struggle defined the Chinese people regardless of their class. This tradition of struggle, moreover, was a valuable and admirable history that the Chinese people should be proud of and should continue. Li Wenhai wrote that, "Previous historical events... are forever the steps to new historical development, and the struggles of those who came before are always worth our analysis and summary".¹⁴⁰ Li took a far more radical stance than historians such as Wu Han, Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji; by arguing that historical narratives always served the present by providing background understanding of the present. Most historians, Li included, argued that the past served the present by teaching the nationalist history of China and the accomplishments of its people, regardless of their class. These historians resisted the projection of the present onto the past through restrictive class analysis by arguing for the uniqueness of the Chinese historical experience and the ongoing value of historical figures from classes other than the proletariat. They did so, however, to support Mao's dispute with the Soviet Union and used the theme of Chinese uniqueness in his master narrative of history, as iterated prior to 1949, in support of Mao's new goals.

Some historians, however, disagreed and argued that historians should only teach the nationalist stories of those historical figures from the classes leading the contemporary revolution. Support by historians for the nationalist pedagogical role of bourgeois historical figures, prior to 1957, implied support for the ongoing role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC. After 1957, historians decoupled the narrative of nationalism from the defence of the bourgeoisie by presenting a version of restrictive class analysis that tied class to nationalism. These historians agreed that nationalism was an important goal of education, but argued that only the stories of the masses and proletariat could be used to inculcate nationalism. A 1958

¹³⁹ Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji, "Xinhai Geming shi ge diguozhuyi de ming", 645.

¹⁴⁰ Li Wenhai, "Xinhai Geming yu hui dang", 186-187.

teachers' handbook written by Wang Zhijiu 王芝九 (1901-1976)¹⁴¹ and Song Guozhu 宋国柱 (d.u.) on modern history pointed out that the goal of education according to communist ideals was:

Our nation's educational policy for history should continuously reflect the nation's beauty, and explain that the peoples of the nation are one big, united, friendly family. It should spare no effort to accurately explain the great economic and cultural accomplishments of the labouring masses, extoll the heroic leaders of the labouring people and their accomplishments in resisting oppression and protecting the nation from invaders, and point out the victorious future for socialism and communism in our nation.¹⁴²

A primary goal of education in the PRC was instilling patriotic ideals of the nation's beauty and the unity of its peoples. It also helped to validate China's departure from the Soviet economic model. Wang and Song argued, however, that patriotism and class were linked. All the people of China were one family, the economic and cultural accomplishments of the labouring masses and their leaders defined Chinese culture and history. The authors, in effect, began to apply restrictive class analysis to their understanding of nationalism and the role of education by narrating the contemporary contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie into the past. Building on the arguments of other historians for the existence of ideological battles between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in culture and literature, Wang and Song implied that the history of other classes served the interests of those classes. Only the history of the proletariat and proletarian historians could guide the era of socialist construction. After 1961, a divide opened between those historians who supported the use of the history of all classes in nationalist education and those historians who linked nationalism and class. The debate

¹⁴¹ Wang Zhijiu joined the CCP in 1925 and taught in middle school for much of his life, including during the War against Japan. He was also a well-known children's author after 1949.

¹⁴² Wang Zhijiu and Song Guozhu, *Zhongxue lishi jiaoshi shouce* 中学历史教师手册 [*Teacher's Handbook for Middle School History*] (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1958), 15.

between the two sides played a role in defining the difference between historicism and restrictive class analysis.

VI. Conclusion

Between 1957 and 1961, some historians invented restrictive class analysis and applied it to historical narratives. Restrictive class analysis was the narration of contemporary contradictions into the past and the exclusive application of class analysis to the evaluation of the historical contributions of a class or individual. Not all historians agreed with either or both premises of restrictive class analysis. Nor did they agree over how restrictive class analysis applied to the four themes of Mao's master narrative of history, that is, class analysis, periodisation, the United Front and Chinese uniqueness. At the core of the historiographical debates over restrictive class analysis was a response to Mao's comments in 1957 that considered how those comments affected Mao's master narrative of history. While historians attempted to apply Mao's comments in 1957 to historical narratives and change Mao's master narrative of history, the debates over restrictive class analysis also built upon and developed from historical debates prior to 1957. The history of the 1911 Revolution played a crucial role in the creation of restrictive class analysis.

In this chapter, I have shown that historians, between 1957 and 1961, began to split into separate camps based on conflicting interpretations of Mao Zedong's master narrative of history. Some historians defended the older master narrative by repeating its conclusions on the periodisation of history or the United Front, while others narrated Mao's 1957 remarks, concerning the contemporary socialist revolution, into the past and created restrictive class analysis. The lines between camps on the application of restrictive class analysis, however, were unclear. Historians did not uniformly adopt both premises of restrictive class analysis and often supported one while opposing the other. As I will cover next, Mao's endowment of historical debate with overt political implications split historians into two distinct and

politically polarised groups: those for historicism, and those who retroactively applied contemporary categories to the past through restrictive class analysis.

The projection of the present onto the past was nothing new; history served the present and served politics from the very beginning of Mao's reign over the CCP. With the exception of the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, however, historians employed historical narratives to serve contemporary political purposes without splitting into polarised camps. The debate over the invention and application of restrictive class analysis among historians held obvious political implications, but historians debated the merits and definition of restrictive class analysis without forming polarised camps. This state of affairs changed after 1961.

The question that would come to define the historical profession after 1961, was the question of theory versus facts. Historians applying restrictive class analysis projected the present onto the past by writing historical narratives that reflected the contemporary contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. They applied contemporary narratives to the past not only to support contemporary leadership and policies, but also to combat the spread of bourgeois ideology through culture, literature and historical narration. Between 1957 and 1961, some historians argued that the realm of historical narration was a key battlefield in the fight against the bourgeoisie and revisionism. After receiving Mao's support in 1962, these historians deepened their argument to state that historical sources produced by the bourgeoisie must include the ideology of and serve the interests of the bourgeoisie. Mao's support led directly to the debate between theory and facts that marked the 1962-1966 period and contributed to the purge of Wu Han at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Prior to 1962, historians had already begun to explore this debate between theory and facts, through the debates over the retroactive application of contemporary categories of class to the past. The first salvos were launched during the Great Leap Forward when "non-Marxist historians were criticized by their students and Marxist colleagues for overemphasizing

historical data and material and neglecting theory, especially Marxist theory of history".¹⁴³

Students put up posters up to protest those historians, demanding that they teach Chinese history as interpreted by Marxism. These students distrusted sources published by the bourgeoisie and demanded that the theory of Marxist history be taught before the facts of history. The facts, as written by other classes, were not trustworthy and first needed to be filtered specifically by the theory of Marxism. Wu Yuzhang instructed the audience during his opening address to the fiftieth anniversary forum on the 1911 Revolution that:

All historians of the exploiter classes are incapable of producing trustworthy history due to their class viewpoints. Only proletarian historians, only Marxists, really dare to face historical truths. Because the proletariat is the most revolutionary and advanced class, it does not need to conceal anything in the past. Some say that because the 1911 Revolution was not that long ago and there are still many who witnessed it themselves, writing a faithful history should be relatively easy. I do not see it this way.¹⁴⁴

Wu claimed that no historical works produced before the foundation of the CCP, or by non-proletarian authors, could be trusted. Historians from an exploiter class necessarily wrote historical narratives which served the interests of that class. Even those who had experienced history, such as veterans of the 1911 Revolution, were not necessarily qualified to write history without understanding the theory of proletarian historiography. The threat of non-proletarian historians writing their own historical narratives and trying to instil the values of other classes into the modern day was an ongoing threat. Wu's comments at the 50th Anniversary Forum on the 1911 Revolution, which symbolised and highlighted the CCP's efforts to reach out to

¹⁴³ Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "On Shi and Lun: Toward a Typology of Historiography in the PRC", *History and Theory* v. 35, no. 4 (December 1996): 79.

¹⁴⁴ Wu Yuzhang, "Zai Xinhai Geming xueshu taolunhui shang de jianghua 在辛亥革命学术讨论会上的讲话 [Speech at the 1911 Revolution Academic Conference]", in Hubei sheng, *Xinhai Geming wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji*, v. 1, 2.

intellectuals after the failure of the Great Leap Forward, set the tone among the historical profession for the following years. The response to Wu's argument that historical narratives produced by other classes were not trustworthy would only come after 1961, in a debate shaped the period and helped lead to the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter 5 – Polarising Mao’s Master Narrative and the Cultural Revolution (1962-1976)

I. Introduction

A debate within the historical profession—the debate between historicism versus the politically motivated anachronism of restrictive class analysis—led up to the opening salvos of the Cultural Revolution in late 1965 and early 1966. Radical historians aligned with Mao targeted prominent historian of the Ming dynasty and Vice-Mayor of Beijing Wu Han for criticism and eventually persecution for his historicist views and links to higher ranking CCP members. Wu was not the only historian persecuted; attacks on historians characterised much of the early course of the Cultural Revolution. These attacks originated in debates held between 1962 and 1965, and even earlier, on Mao’s master narrative of history and the history of the 1911 Revolution. Mao polarised the debates over restrictive class analysis with his 1962 comments on class struggle and caused historians to split into two camps divided on the issue of restrictive class analysis. The debates over restrictive class analysis from 1957 to 1965 became evidence against historicists during the lead-up to and early movements of the Cultural Revolution, as historicism in all its forms became political anathema.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong specifically targeted historicists for persecution due to their opposition to the “historical research methods of 1958”,¹ or restrictive class analysis. Mao revised his master narrative of history at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution but rather than teach the narrative to historians through a Rectification Movement, as he had in Yan’an in the 1940s, Mao and his supporters purged and exiled many historians. Even many of Mao’s supporters from within both politics and the historical profession, were caught up in the purges of the Cultural Revolution, being persecuted for their political views,

¹ Mao Zedong, “Zai zhongyang zhengzhi ju kuoda huiyi shang de jianghua 在中央政治局扩大会议上的讲话 [Mao’s speech at the Enlarged Session of the CCP CC Politburo]”, 20 March 1966, in *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, 2nd edition, eds. Song Yongyi et al (Hong Kong: Universities Service Centre for China Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2006), CD-ROM.

historical views or relationship to other Party leaders viewed as undesirable to Mao.

In his persecution of Wu Han, Mao's primary goal was to preserve his own power. The end of the Great Leap Forward and the reduction in his influence over domestic policy, accompanied by the restoration of Soviet-style economic policies advanced by Party leaders like Liu Shaoqi, convinced Mao that the PRC had become revisionist like the USSR.² Attacking Wu Han's honorary position provided a means to attack the Beijing Party Committee, which protected him, and eventually Liu Shaoqi.³ The attack on Wu Han was premeditated and designed to force a political confrontation between the radicals supporting Mao and the more conservative voices of the Beijing City Party Committee.⁴ Mao and the radicals around him planned the Cultural Revolution to prevent the revisionist regression of the revolution, primarily by eliminating Mao's rivals and replacing them with a new, revolutionary generation.⁵ The Cultural Revolution was also designed to re-establish Mao's power and eliminate all voices in the CCP opposed to his policies and Mao Zedong Thought.

Between 1962 and 1965, Mao began to modify Mao Zedong Thought and his master narrative of history to defend China from the threat of revisionism. Mao's fear of revisionism stemmed not only from concern for his power but also the ideological threat that revisionism posed to both the Chinese and global revolutions. Most importantly, in 1962 Mao reminded his colleagues that class struggle had not ended and still defined the PRC.⁶ Class struggle was Mao's primary counterattack against those in the Party he deemed to be revisionist.⁷ Mao

² MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 2, 336; Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*, 196; Lynch, *Mao*, 179.

³ Pusey, *Wu Han*, 56-58.

⁴ Lynch, *Mao*, 181; Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 32-33; Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976* (New York: Bloomsburg Press, 2016), 47-49.

⁵ Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 111-112; Harding, *Organizing China*, 235, 325; Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 213.

⁶ Mao Zedong, "Zai ba jie shi zhong quanhui shang de jianghua 在八届十中全会上的讲话 [Speech at the 10th Plenum of the 8th National Congress of the CCP]", in *Mao Zedong Sixiang wan sui (1961.1—1968.5) 毛泽东思想万岁 (1961.1—1968.5)* [*Long Live Mao Zedong Thought (January 1961 to May 1968)*] (China: N.P., 1969), 34-37.

⁷ MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 3, 283.

believed that socialist means, such as class struggle, inculcated proletarian ideology and were necessary to achieve the end of socialism. Other Party leaders, such as Liu Shaoqi, however, did not agree and this clash contributed to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.⁸ Liu had also warned against the use of Mao Zedong Thought in external propaganda, which made Liu a personal as well as ideological enemy and widened the split within the Party.⁹ As in 1957, when Mao argued that “All social forces and groups that oppose the socialist revolution and attack the socialist project are the enemies of the people”,¹⁰ Mao defined class according to ideology and considered culture and education part of the ideological battle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat for the hearts of the next generation and the future of socialism.¹¹ Thus to eliminate bourgeois ideology and inculcate proletarian ideology, Mao and the radicals around him targeted intellectuals in the cultural sphere—including historians—during the first purges of the Cultural Revolution.¹² In 1957, Mao argued that class conflict between the proletariat and bourgeoisie could be non-antagonistic, but Mao’s loss of authority and the reversal of Great Leap Forward policies after 1962 convinced Mao and other radicals that the contradiction was now antagonistic.

Beginning in 1961, pragmatists in the CCP intentionally opened a new period of blooming and contending in academic debates.¹³ The 1961 50th Anniversary Conference on the 1911 Revolution occurred during, and acted as a focal point of, this opening of debate by the CCP. Due to their prior experiences, including the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, most historians did not trust the CCP and instead only spoke their minds if protected by those higher up.¹⁴ Thus,

⁸ Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 268.

⁹ Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 152-153.

¹⁰ Mao Zedong, “Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti”, 1.

¹¹ Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 161-163.

¹² MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 3, 396.

¹³ Goldman, “The Unique ‘Blooming and Contending’ of 1961-62”, 54-83. Blooming and contending refers to Mao’s call in 1956 to, “let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend 百花齐放, 百家争鸣 [*bai hua qifang, bai jia zhengming*]”, a reference to an ancient poem that opened the Hundred Flowers movement. Intellectual discourse during the Hundred Flowers movement often used these terms.

¹⁴ Goldman, *China’s Intellectuals*, 10.

criticisms of the CCP arose from sections of the Party which felt insulated from any potential repercussions: the Beijing Party Committee and the Propaganda Department.¹⁵ These included prominent historians such as Wu Han who opposed the rise of restrictive class analysis by defending the need for historicism—grounding historical analysis in the context of the times studied—to correctly interpret and narrate history for the benefit of the Party and nation.

At the same time as parts of the Party advocated blooming and contending in historical narratives, Mao's remarks never to forget class struggle in September 1962 polarised historical debates and led to new restrictions on the narration of history. The Socialist Education Movement¹⁶ started by Mao in 1962, for example, forced historians to refrain from writing allegorical or satirical historical accounts and instead to focus on revolutionary themes in academia.¹⁷ Despite the change in tenor, historians continued to engage in academic debates and argue over the application of restrictive class analysis to history. They focused on resolving debates over issues such as the evaluation of historical figures.¹⁸ Most historical debates proceeded within scholarly bounds, until 1965.¹⁹ By 1965, Mao had gathered together sufficient radical intellectuals, including historians who had supported restrictive class analysis in previous debates, in the CCP to begin purging the cultural and intellectual spheres.²⁰ The influence of these radical-yet-professional historians played a key role in polarising academic debates and legitimising the persecutions of the Cultural Revolution.²¹ At the same time, some younger historians took advantage of political developments to pursue personal advancement

¹⁵ Goldman, "The Unique 'Blooming and Contending' of 1961-62", 68.

¹⁶ The Socialist Education Movement (*Shehuizhuyi jiaoyu yundong* 社会主义教育运动), also known as the Four Cleanups Movement (*Si qing yundong* 四清运动) was a movement launched by Mao focused on cleaning up corruption in the villages, but also included a campaign to re-educate the bureaucracy and intellectual sphere through labour in the countryside. The movement was opposed by many of the pragmatic CCP leaders who had pushed Mao into the background after the end of the Great Leap Forward.

¹⁷ Teiwes, *Politics and Purges*, 572-3.

¹⁸ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 622-4.

¹⁹ Merle Goldman, "The Role of History in Party Struggle, 1962-1964", in *The China Quarterly*, no. 51 (Jul-Sep 1972), 502-509; Stephan Uhally Jr., "The Controversy over Li Hsiu-ch'eng: An Ill-Timed Centenary", *The Journal of Asian Studies* v. 25, n. 2 (Feb 1966), 316.

²⁰ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 3, 439-440; Spence, *Mao Zedong*, 158-9.

²¹ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "History and Truth in Chinese Marxist Historiography", 443.

often at the expense of older historians targeted by Mao and the radicals.²² Radical historians used the opinions voiced in earlier debates as evidence of their colleagues' non-proletarian ideologies and as justification for the persecution of these dissenters. The use of political means to end the debates between restrictive class analysis and historicism, however, does not mean that the prior debates lacked historical merit.

This chapter covers three debates within the historiography of the 1911 Revolution that highlight the polarisation of historical debates over the resistance by historicists to the rise of restrictive class analysis. The first section covers the debate over the use of restrictive class analysis as a method of classifying the bourgeois figures of the 1911 Revolution. In this debate, important Party figures played a role, but debate among professional historians defined it. The second section shows how restrictive class analysis fundamentally altered the evolution of the four themes of Mao Zedong Thought involved in Mao's master narrative of history and narrative of the 1911 Revolution. Historians attempted to reach consensus on the alterations to Mao's master narrative and did so for certain themes, while becoming more polarised in others. The third section covers the lead-up to and course of the Cultural Revolution to show the role of historical narratives and historians during the movement. Mao and radical political figures seized upon polarised debates among historians to portray historical narratives as an ideological battleground, thus validating their attacks on historians and their patrons during the Cultural Revolution.

II. Resistance to the Rise of Restrictive Class Analysis

Between 1962 and 1965, prominent historians and Party members, many wearing both hats simultaneously, engaged in a fierce debate about the application of restrictive class analysis to history. All historians agreed that class analysis was the foundation of historical study and that historical narratives served the CCP, yet they disagreed about how narratives should serve the

²² Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 624.

Party. On one side were historians like Wu Han who argued that history best served the Party by grounding narratives and understandings of the past in historicism rather than forcing historical narratives to reflect contemporary policies. Wu Han believed that historicism provided a truer understanding of the past with which to inform contemporary policy and ideology.²³ Wu defended historicism to better inform the present and to defend the historical profession. On the other side were radical historians applying restrictive class analysis who supported Mao by arguing that historians needed to insert contemporary narratives of class struggle—particularly those about the between the proletariat and bourgeoisie—into the past to serve propaganda and pedagogical purposes.²⁴

This section considers two topics of debate active among historians during this time that display the polarisation within the historical profession on the issue of restrictive class analysis. The first is the evolution of the ongoing debate over the assessment of historical figures and the second is the definition of classes and their ability to influence history through class conflict. This section argues that historians often agreed on certain specific aspects of history, such as the evaluation of certain historical figures or narratives of a single event, but that their debate became polarised over the application of restrictive class analysis to the entirety of Mao's master narrative.

II.A. Historicism and the Evaluation of Historical Figures

Among the liveliest topics of discussion during the 1962-65 period within historical circles was the evaluation of historical figures. Historians had debated the topic of how to assess historical figures since the 1949 foundation of the PRC and had not arrived at a consensus by 1962. Questions of how to evaluate bourgeois historical figures and use them for pedagogical purposes defined the earlier debates on the issue. Between 1949 and 1957, historians used

²³ Pusey, *Wu Han*, 66-67; Tom Fisher, "'The Play's the Thing': Wu Han and Hai Rui Revisited", *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, n. 7 (Jan 1982): 14-5.

²⁴ Harrison, *The Chinese Communists and Chinese Peasant Rebellions*, 214.

the debate over the evaluation of historical figures to argue for the ongoing role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC. After the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, however, some historians pioneered the method of restrictive class analysis through debates on the evaluation of historical figures. After Mao's remark never to forget class struggle in September 1962, two major arguments against restrictive class analysis for historical figures prevailed in the analysis of historical figures. The first continued to make the same points that historians had made since the foundation of the PRC: historical figures could evolve over time and historians should analyse their entire life rather than giving precedence to a single event. The second argument, which emerged only after 1962, was a historicist one: historians like Wu Han argued that projecting contemporary definitions of class and class conflict onto the past resulted in a fundamental misunderstanding of history.

Most historians argued, as they had prior to 1962, that individuals could grow and change with time, and while class certainly placed limits on that growth, those limits were not as prohibitive as historians who advocated restrictive class analysis claimed. Hu Shengwu and Jin Chongji argued that in Huang Xing, "the two tendencies of the [bourgeois] intellectuals' patriotic anti-imperial revolutionary aspect and their wavering, conciliatory aspect expressed themselves. At the time of preparing for the 1911 Revolution, the revolutionary aspect had a commanding place in [Huang Xing's] life. After the establishment of the republic, the conciliatory aspect took over as the commanding aspect of his life".²⁵ Hu and Jin believed that both Huang Xing was defined by the times he lived in and his class origins, but had flexibility to act within those boundaries. Huang Xing specifically, was capable of revolutionary anti-imperialism and also wavering conciliation, and Huang expressed each of these capabilities to different degrees at different times. Zhang Kaiyuan wrote similarly of Zhang Jian 张謇 (1853-1926)²⁶ and argued that Zhang Jian's "limited enlightenment and progressiveness" was eroded

²⁵ Jin Chongji and Hu Shengwu, "Lun Huang Xing 论黄兴 [On Huang Xing]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1962 (3): 11.

²⁶ Zhang Jian was a Qing bureaucrat, later minister under the Yuan Shikai government and prominent industrialist. Zhang supported reform rather than revolution to fix China's ails, and has since been

by his increase in economic and political power.²⁷ Despite Zhang Jian's loyalty to Yuan Shikai and the Beiyang military, and despite his class origins as a bureaucratic capitalist, Zhang Kaiyuan argued that he had once held progressive and enlightened views for his time. Zhao Jinyu 赵金钰 (1929-2015)²⁸ argued that the phases in a person's life could be totalled up to see whether one's progressive contributions outweighed reactionary stances at another point in life. Assessing the different ideological stances of Zhang Binglin, Zhao wrote:

As for which of his different ideologies was more important at any given time, it should be measured by the degree of their effect on society. For example, the Zhang Binglin of the period leading to the 1911 Revolution held bourgeois nationalist and democratic thought, but also feudal establishment thought, yet it was his bourgeois nationalist and democratic thought which was most important and had the clearest effect on society.... Examining Zhang Binglin's ideological changes over different periods in his life, there is the question of primary and secondary, and the answer must be that the period leading to the 1911 Revolution is primary, and the Hundred Days Reform period or after the 1911 Revolution are secondary.²⁹

Zhao concluded that Zhang Binglin's early contributions to society were greater than his later detrimental effects, meaning that not only was there flexibility in the contributions of historical figures, but there was also flexibility in assessing historical figures and their class backgrounds. These authors continued to write in much the same way as they had between 1958 and 1961 and opposed the methodology of restrictive class analysis by showing that, while class was predictive, exceptions existed. They opposed the exclusive application of analysis of class backgrounds to evaluate a figure and therefore argued against restrictive class

treated very poorly in PRC produced histories for reactionary policies.

²⁷ Zhang Kaiyuan, "Lun Zhang Jian de maodun xingge 论张謇的矛盾性格 [On the Contradictory Personality of Zhang Jian]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1963 (3): 95.

²⁸ Zhao Jinyu was a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Modern History Department.

²⁹ Zhao Jinyu, "Lun Zhang Binglin de zhengzhi sixiang 论章炳麟的政治思想 [On Zhang Binglin's Political Thought]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1964 (1): 46.

analysis.

Others argued even further that restrictive class analysis harmed historical research and the contemporary revolution by misinterpreting history. Historicists, like Wu Han, not only opposed the exclusive use of class analysis to understand historical figures but also opposed the modernisation of the past through restrictive class analysis. Historicism, according to Wu Han, meant that, “The analysis and assessment of historical figures should be based on concrete historical reality, not on concepts or principles”. The six standards Wu gave for the assessment of historical figures were: evaluate figures according to their contemporary circumstances; remember that all history is based on either class struggle or the production struggle; a person’s effect on history must be tied into and understood through the *longue durée* of history; political actions, rather than personal lives, should be put first; pay more attention to class relations rather than work in absolutes of birth class; and not to modernise the past by applying current ideology to it.³⁰ According to Wu Han, class analysis was crucially important because history was the record of class struggle, but figures still needed to be understood in the context of their times. Only narratives grounded in a deep understanding of the past could provide accurate lessons for the contemporary times. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, Song Du 宋都 (d.u.) wrote an article in defence of Wu Han and his play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*³¹ for the *Guangming Daily*. Song wrote:

If we measure historical figures according to today’s proletarian standard... is that not against historicism? If we are to use today’s ruler as a measurement, then not only would it be forbidden to study the historical figure of Hai Rui, but even the 1911

³⁰ Wu Han, “Lun lishi renwu pingjia”, 5.

³¹ *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* (*Hai Rui ba guan* 海瑞罢官) was a play written by Wu Han and published in 1961 which depicted the Ming minister Hai Rui who was imprisoned for criticising the emperor. While originally well received and praised by even Mao Zedong, it was quickly censored and by the Cultural Revolution it was attacked as an allegory for the exile of Peng Dehuai after speaking his mind to Mao about the Great Leap Forward. This attack was one of the first salvos of the Cultural Revolution. For more, see Ahn Byung-Joon, “The Politics of Peking Opera, 1962-1965”, in *Asian Survey* v. 12, n. 12 (Dec 1972): 1066-1081; Fisher, “The Play’s the Thing”; and Pusey, *Wu Han*.

Revolution era Sun Yat-sen would be backwards, to say nothing of Hong Xiuquan....

But who would negate the fact that... Hai Rui, Hong Xiuquan and Sun Yat-sen had major effects within certain historical eras and limits?³²

Song directly attacked the notion of restrictive class analysis for applying a narrative of the contemporary class struggle to all of history. Wu and Song were concerned about both the integrity of the historical profession and its usefulness to politics. To apply such strict contemporary standards to the past defied the purpose and nature of historical research, as historians such as Wu and Song understood it, and thereby rendered history useless for informing political decisions. Wu, like all historians in the PRC, believed that historical narratives needed to serve the present. Wu, however, saw history as providing the context for the present and providing the present with lessons, while those who applied restrictive class analysis increasingly viewed history as one part of the ideological battle against the bourgeoisie.

II.B. Reaffirming the Consensus on Definitions of Class

Between 1962 and 1965, historians debated the historical contributions of classes and the boundaries between them, reaffirming the consensus that the bourgeoisie during the period of the 1911 Revolution was incapable of leading the revolution. Returning to this prior consensus represented a middle ground within the debates that occurred on the application of restrictive class analysis between 1957 and 1961. These debates over class analysis and the position of the bourgeoisie focused on defining the distinct types of bourgeoisie and the limitations of their contributions to the revolution. By 1962, historians used the issue of both the limitations and the differentiation of strata within the bourgeoisie to reach a consensus that the bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution. Some radical historians, however, attacked the

³² Song Du, “Bu neng zhe yang fouding – yu Yao Wen Yuan tongzhi shangque 不能这样否定 – 与姚文元同志商榷 [This Kind of Negation is Not Practical – A Discussion with Comrade Yao Wen Yuan]”, *Guangming ribao*, 9 January 1966.

position of the bourgeoisie on other topics of history, as I cover later in this chapter. The ability of historians to reaffirm a consensus shows that historical discourse continued in a collegial and academic fashion on many topics and became polarised only on those topics specifically targeted by Mao and the radical historians arrayed around him.

Historians found a consensus on the limits of the bourgeoisie to lead a revolution in their narratives of the 1911 Revolution. Historians agreed to apply one part of the method of restrictive class analysis—the projection of the contemporary contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat onto the past—while not denying the possibility of the bourgeoisie to contribute to the revolution. Qi Longwei 祁龙威 (1922-2013)³³ argued that the reformist faction of the bourgeoisie during the 1911 Revolution eschewed revolution and followed reform because of the limitations of the class. The reformists consisted of bourgeoisie which had “political positions in the country and grasped a certain economic standing”, and therefore could not possibly support a revolution which threatened their interests.³⁴ It was impossible for the reformists to follow any other path because the comprador bourgeoisie always pursued its class interests, which the political structures of the time served. Li Wei-han wrote:

The big bourgeoisie is the vile enemy [of the revolution] because it is a traitorous class, the people cannot trust it. The big bourgeoisie have never given up its methods of tricking the people, however, so especially when the revolution arrives and it cannot control the situation to preserve the old [system], it switches sides and talks conciliation with the revolutionaries. [Sometimes the big bourgeoisie] even infiltrates the revolutionary ranks to manipulate the wavering classes and people within the revolutionary ranks to break down the revolution from inside and steal the fruits of the

³³ Qi Longwei was a professor at Yangzhou University from 1947 until his death in 2013. He specialised in late-Qing history, publishing most frequently after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

³⁴ Qi Longwei, “Ji Qing mo de yubei lixian gonghui 纪清末的预备立宪公会 [On the Society for the Preparation of a Constitution at the End of the Qing Era]”, *Guangming ribao*, 20 May 1964.

revolution.³⁵

According to Qi Longwei and Li Weihai, the 1911 Revolution demonstrated that the big bourgeoisie always opposed the revolution due to its class interests. Historians wrote that the historical bourgeoisie was too tied to existing power structures to support the revolution and argued that the bourgeoisie did not lead the historical revolution and therefore could not lead the contemporary revolution.

Most historians, moreover, made no distinction between different strata of the bourgeoisie and attributed the same class interests to all bourgeois elements. Liu Danian used the example of the 1911 Revolution to argue that, “Political authority is a threshold to the bourgeoisie: those on the outside are of one face, while those inside are of another”. As soon as bourgeois elements without links to existing power structures gained power, they betrayed the revolution and allied with the remnants of the old system.³⁶ According to Liu Danian, the national, revolutionary bourgeoisie became a part of the big, reactionary bourgeoisie as soon as it attained any degree of power. Therefore, the same limitations on the ability to contribute to history applied to the entirety of the bourgeoisie. Huang Yifeng 黄逸峰 (1906-1988)³⁷ argued that the big comprador and petty national bourgeoisie remained of one class; an individual could easily move between the two groups. More importantly, the two groups were not always aware of the differences between them and thus mixed together during the 1911 Revolution, which allowed the compradors to steal the fruits of the revolution. Not to learn from this experience posed a danger to the contemporary revolution because, Huang added,

³⁵ Li Weihai, “Xin minzhuzhuyi geming shiqi zhengqu wuchanjie lingdaoquan de douzheng 新民主主义革命时期争取无产阶级领导权的斗争 [The Struggle to Achieve Proletarian Leadership during the Period of the New Democratic Revolution]”, *Renmin ribao*, 9 February 1962, 5.

³⁶ Liu Danian, “Zhongguo jindaishi zhu wenti 中国近代史诸问题 [Some Questions in Chinese Modern History]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1963 (3): 14.

³⁷ Huang Yifeng first joined the CCP in 1925, quitting and re-joining three times. He worked in the 4th Route Army during the War against Japan, and during and after the war worked with various railways. In 1951 he began working Chinese Academy of Sciences in economic research.

the divide between comprador and national bourgeoisie existed even in contemporary times.³⁸

These historians agreed that the entire bourgeoisie shared similar interests across various strata and that whenever the bourgeoisie gained power it became opposed to the people and the revolution. The bourgeoisie's leadership over the 1911 Revolution had caused the revolution to fail because of this historical limitation. The bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution, but these authors made no argument that it could not participate in the ongoing revolution in a supporting role.

The debate on the boundaries of the bourgeoisie in the 1911 Revolution, which had been ongoing since the foundation of the PRC, did not stop in 1962. Some historians continued to argue that different strata of the bourgeoisie existed in 1911, each of which played distinct roles in the revolution. By identifying multiple strata of bourgeoisie, these historians argued for the ability of some bourgeois to contribute to the socialist revolution in a supporting role.

In a 1962 monograph, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978)³⁹ wrote that the "Revolutionary Alliance reflected the desires of these middle and lower level national bourgeoisie, and became their political representative" because of the desire of the middle and lower levels of the bourgeoisie to freely develop capitalism.⁴⁰ The desire for free and independent capitalist development among the lower strata of the bourgeoisie grew because that group experienced the greatest difficulties expanding its political, social and economic power. Guo argued that only the bourgeoisie tied to foreign or domestic oppressive powers had no place in the revolution. Liu Danian argued that, "To distinguish the comprador bourgeoisie from the national bourgeoisie in a semi-colonial country, and moreover to grasp their different

³⁸ Huang Yifeng, "Guanyu jiu Zhongguo maibanjieji de yanjiu 关于旧中国买办阶级的研究 [Concerning Research on Old China's Compradors]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1964 (3): 89.

³⁹ Guo Moruo was a prominent author, philosopher and historian who joined the CCP in 1927. He studied abroad in Japan prior to the War against Japan and became the first President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences after the 1949 foundation of the PRC. He was an early target of the Cultural Revolution but the praise of Mao and Jiang Qing, and recantation of his prior works kept him from being criticised too heavily.

⁴⁰ Guo Moruo, *Zhongguo shi gao* 中国史稿 [A Draft History of China], v. 4 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1962), 163.

characteristics, is of major significance to distinguishing the enemies and the friends of the revolution and to assuring the complete victory of the people's revolution".⁴¹ The failure to analyse classes and determine the boundaries between levels of the bourgeoisie doomed the 1911 Revolution, just as a failure to analyse classes in contemporary times would doom the ongoing socialist revolution. Identifying all bourgeois elements as reactionaries and enemies imperilled the revolution by alienating potential allies. Guo and Liu focused on defining the reactionary from the progressive strata of the bourgeoisie in order to argue that some bourgeois elements played a progressive role in both the historical and contemporary revolutions. These historians agreed that the bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution, but argued that certain parts of the bourgeoisie could still be allies of the revolution. Between 1962 and 1965, historians continued to debate whether the bourgeoisie could contribute to the socialist revolution and reached a limited agreement to reaffirm the narrative that both the historical and contemporary bourgeoisie were incapable of leading a revolution. They agreed to some aspects of restrictive class analysis and continued to debate others without the debates becoming polarised, at least when discussing specific historical events or figures. Historians reached far fewer consensus opinions on debates concerned with overarching historical methodology.

III. The Evolution of the Themes of Mao Zedong Thought under Restrictive Class Analysis

By the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, historians had significantly altered Mao's master narrative of history and of the 1911 Revolution. Historians, both the radicals arrayed around Mao and the historicists, rebalanced the relative importance of the themes of Mao Zedong Thought—class analysis, periodisation through contradictions, the United Front, and the unique nature of Chinese society—to reflect the changes in Mao Zedong Thought. As Mao

⁴¹ Liu Danian, "Shiwu nian lai Zhongguo de lishi yanjiu gongzuo 十五年来中国的历史研究工作 [Chinese Work on Historical Research over the Past 15 Years]," in *Zhongguo jindaishi zhu wenti* 中国近代史诸问题 [Some Questions in Chinese Modern History], ed. Liu Danian (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1965), 249.

shifted Mao Zedong Thought to validate his reactions to his fears of revisionism and losing power, the master narrative shifted as well. The invention and application of restrictive class analysis starting in 1957 and intensifying after 1962, dramatically altered the other themes of Mao Zedong Thought in narratives of the 1911 Revolution. This section covers the changes that historians applying restrictive class analysis made to the other three themes of Mao Zedong Thought—periodisation according to contradictions, the United Front and the unique nature of Chinese society—in narratives of the 1911 Revolution to show how the master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought adapted to Mao's changing goals after 1962.

III.A. Class and Ideological Contradictions in the Periodisation of History

After 1962, historians forged a consensus on the periodisation of history that projected Mao's definition of classes along ideological lines, into the past. Mao created a narrative of the New Democratic Revolution to justify his policies and leadership during the War against Japan and the later Civil War. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the periodisation of history was one of the liveliest debates among historians in the PRC. In 1957, Mao argued that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat defined the socialist period but that the contradiction could be solved non-antagonistically. In response, historians between 1957 and 1961 debated over the number and type of contradictions in history. Despite Mao's remarks on the importance of class struggle in the PRC in 1962, most historians agreed with those authors who had argued throughout 1957 to 1961 that multiple contradictions could exist at the same time and that these contradictions could be solved incrementally. In doing so, such historians supported Mao's ideological definition of class, even as they disagreed with his assertion of the primacy of fundamental contradictions. They adopted some of Mao's conclusions, but not all of them. This shift in the theme of periodisation shows not only that Mao's master narrative of history had changed due to shifts in Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's goals, but also that many historians did not follow Mao as closely as he would have liked.

Historians between 1962 and 1966 largely agreed upon the less restrictive version of periodisation from the 1957 to 1961 debate, which allowed for multiple main contradictions to exist simultaneously and for the incremental resolution of fundamental contradictions. The biggest shift was that these historians argued that ideological contradictions, and not just economic contradictions, played a major role in advancing history. Li Wei-han argued that the essential difference between old and New Democracy was one of recognition; the 1911 Revolution did not realise that the task of the revolution was to oppose feudalism and imperialism. The New Democratic Revolution, led by the proletariat, recognised the task of the revolution and therefore finally put forth an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist call.⁴² The advance in ideology played as much of a role as the change in class leadership. Guo Moruo wrote:

The bourgeois revolutionary faction started to separate from the reformist faction.

The bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie intellectuals gradually revolutionised, began to propagandise the revolution and organise themselves. These activities advanced the high tide of the bourgeois revolutionary movement. Thereafter, the motivating force pushing the advancement of Chinese history started to change from the spontaneous peasant-led struggles to the bourgeoisie-led democratic revolution".⁴³

Guo argued that it was the intellectual development of the bourgeoisie that led to the high tide of the revolutionary movement in 1911. The change in the ideology and organisation of the bourgeoisie impacted the development of the contradiction between China and imperialism. Liu Danian wrote that the changes in politics and life following the 1911 Revolution pushed people to find new theories and a new revolutionary path, which allowed "what none dared to say before to be said".⁴⁴ Liu argued that the significance of the 1911

⁴² Li Wei-han, "Xin minzhuzhuyi geming shiqi zhengqu wuchanjiejie lingdaoquan de douzheng", 5.

⁴³ Guo Moruo, *Zhongguo shi gao*, v. 4, 160.

⁴⁴ Liu Danian, "Lun Zhongguo jindaishi shang de renmin qunzhong 论中国近代史上的人民群众 [On the People's Masses in Modern Chinese history]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1964 (1): 7.

Revolution lay primarily in its opening up of the future due to changes in the ideology and life of the people. These historians all agreed that the advance of ideology created transitional phases in the periodisation of history and followed Mao's definition of classes along ideological lines even as they opposed the modernisation of the past by reading the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat into historical narratives.

By arguing that shifts in ideology played a role in the periodisation of history, moreover, these historians portrayed history as an ideological battleground, agreeing with those who applied more restrictive versions of class analysis. History moved forward not only through the class struggle of direct revolutionary actions but also through ideological class struggle. Advancing the awareness and ideology of the people played a direct role in the progress of history, so overcoming and attacking the influence of old morals and ideologies constituted class struggle. All three of the authors cited in this section—Li Weihan, Guo Moruo and Liu Danian—were criticised and persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. The consensus they forged on viewing ideological struggle as equivalent to class struggle set the grounds for their persecution by radical historians. The radical historians of the Cultural Revolution contended that historical narratives constituted an ideological, and therefore class battleground against political enemies hiding within the PRC. Radicals interpreted these historians' argument that bourgeois ideology helped advance the revolution, as supporting bourgeois ideology, and may have helped lead to their persecution.

III.B. The United Front and the Leadership of the Revolution

Following the developments of 1957 to 1961, historians completely stopped referring to the Revolutionary Alliance of the 1911 Revolution as a United Front. Whereas portraying the Revolutionary Alliance as a United Front had been a major part of Mao's narrative during his ascent to power in the CCP in the 1940s, by 1962 Mao no longer relied upon the United

Front.⁴⁵ Few historians continued to discuss the makeup of the Revolutionary Alliance after 1962 and none argued that it was a United Front. Instead, historians chose to use the history of the Revolutionary Alliance as an example to prove that the bourgeoisie could contribute to but never lead the revolution. This shows that that historians had significantly altered Mao's master narrative of history to accord with Mao's changing goals.

Historians continued to argue for the place of the bourgeoisie in the contemporary PRC by returning to the historical example of the Revolutionary Alliance. They argued that the bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution, but could take part in it if led by the proletariat. Historians achieved this consensus by applying half of the premises of restrictive class analysis to evaluate historical figures and classes: the modernisation of the past but not the exclusive use of class analysis. Historians abandoned the old consensus interpretation of the Revolutionary Alliance as a United Front so as to support the new consensus interpretation of it as an example of the bourgeoisie's inability to lead the revolution. For example, Guo Moruo blamed the Nanjing Provisional Government, rather than the entire bourgeoisie, for the failure of the revolution. Guo argued that the revolutionary leaders became self-serving and chose to accept whatever scraps of power Yuan Shikai and imperialism would feed them.⁴⁶ As with argument that the bourgeoisie would abandon the revolution as soon as it attained power, noted earlier, Guo argued that the bourgeois leaders of the Nanjing Provisional Government isolated themselves by opposing the masses and therefore caved in to internal and external pressures. According to Guo, while the bourgeoisie was weak, that weakness expressed itself most clearly when the bourgeoisie took power. If other classes took on the role of leadership then the bourgeoisie could still play a role in the revolution. Li Shu wrote that, "After the Wuchang Uprising, the bourgeoisie once again displayed the incapability of its revolutionary leadership. They chose a policy of conciliating with imperialism and feudal forces and let

⁴⁵ The United Front Department was criticised from 1962 due to many writers of the time refuting the possibility that the bourgeoisie could become or aid the proletariat. Groot, *Managing Transitions*, 113.

⁴⁶ Guo Moruo, *Zhongguo shi gao*, v. 4, 196-197.

compradors and feudal forces steal the fruits of the revolution. After the 1911 Revolution, the people had a hard time seeing the difference between the bourgeois revolutionary faction and the reformists".⁴⁷ Li agreed that the bourgeoisie could not lead China's revolution because once in power all bourgeois elements betrayed the revolution to protect their own interests. This incapacity for leadership, however, did not entail the complete inability of the bourgeoisie to contribute at all. Both Guo and Li abandoned the terminology of the United Front which had defined Mao's narrative of the 1911 Revolution prior to 1949, showing that the United Front no longer held a place in Mao Zedong Thought. Once again, however, both Guo and Li were targeted during the Cultural Revolution, showing that Mao and the radicals around him interpreted any affirmation of the bourgeoisie as proof of hidden support for the political dominance of the class. Guo and Li made themselves targets of the Cultural Revolution by accepting part of, rather than all, the changes Mao made to his master narrative.

III.C. The Lessons of the 1911 Revolution Beyond China

After the debates taking place between 1957 and 1961, historians from 1962 until 1965 did not significantly develop the theme of which lessons the Chinese Revolution afforded the global revolution. The two basic lessons that the 1911 Revolution provided the global revolution—that the model of the proletariat-led Chinese revolution could be spread to other developing nations and that revisionism as it occurred in the USSR was in fact the restoration of the bourgeoisie—remained pervasive throughout the Cultural Revolution. The lack of development, however, shows that the theme had changed markedly in response to Mao's changing goals since Mao's original use of the theme of Chinese uniqueness in Yan'an. Mao had argued for the uniqueness of Chinese history and society to support his policies and leadership within the CCP. Once successful, Mao and his adherents no longer sought to prove their point and instead found value in historical narratives which described the Chinese

⁴⁷ Li Shu, *Makesizhuyi yu Zhongguo geming* 马克思主义与中国革命 [*Marxism and the Chinese Revolution*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1963), 114.

revolutionary experience as providing lessons for the world. By 1958, due to the growth of the Sino-Soviet Split, Mao and historians of the PRC were interested in how to export China's model of revolution to other developing nations and thus increase the PRC's power around the world. Mao's 1962 reminder never to forget class struggle did nothing to change the debate, and historians from both historicist and restrictive class analysis camps used historical narratives to justify Mao's foreign policy.

The first lesson the Chinese Revolution gave the global revolution was the model of a vanguard party of the proletariat to lead the national revolution. In an article addressing the topic of the role of Chinese historians, Liu Danian wrote:

[Asian, African and Latin American countries] are a part of the global proletarian revolution and the global revolutionary alliance, yet these countries are still in the period of the bourgeois revolution. They exist in a time similar to China's 1911 Revolution, and some exist in a time like the Boxer movement. China's experiences over these eighty years, particularly its anti-imperialist experiences, both the positive and negative, are necessary for the revolutionary people of those areas.... The study of modern Chinese history should focus on [meeting] this need [to spread the lessons of the Chinese revolution].⁴⁸

China's lesson to the global revolution, according to Liu, was to skip the methods of the 1911 Revolution and proceed directly to learning the lessons of the CCP: a vanguard party of the proletariat needed to lead the revolution. Liu argued that the goal of Chinese historians was to spread this model across the world.

Other authors used similar historical narratives and restrictive class analysis to specify not how the Chinese revolution could guide other revolutions to victory, but instead how to safeguard

⁴⁸ Liu Danian, "Zhongguo jindaishi zhu wenti", 7.

the revolution after victory. Contrary to those historians who argued only that the bourgeoisie could not lead the revolution, historians applying more restrictive versions of class analysis used the platform of the lessons of the revolution to argue that contradictions must arise between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Historians wrote on this lesson to criticise Soviet revisionism, and they argued that China's revolution not only offered a model of revolution for the developing world, it also offered a model which also prevented the later failure of the socialist revolution. The experience of the 1911 Revolution and the revolutionaries' loss of authority afterwards, played a particularly illustrative role in this case. Zhang Nan 张枬 (d.u.) and Wang Renzhi 王忍之 (1933-)⁴⁹ wrote that the bourgeoisie was well versed in hiding its true intentions behind policies which seemed socialist. Zhang and Wang used the example of the land reform policies of the Revolutionary Alliance to argue that the bourgeoisie advocated for a "relatively 'benevolent' capitalism" in the hope of "avoiding the disastrous consequences of capitalist development and stopping the occurrence of a socialist revolution".⁵⁰ Li Shu wrote similarly in his history of Marxism in China that:

Realistically, the socialism used by Sun Yat-sen, *Min Bao* and the small number of political commentators opposing Liang Qichao was not Marxist, nor was the revolution they advocated for a socialist revolution.... Sun not only thought that socialism was possible, but also that it was a job for the bourgeoisie rather than the proletariat. Sun saw the intensification of the troubles in American and European capitalism and was grateful for China's backwardness, because he believed that if [the bourgeoisie] adopted the spirit of socialism and prevented monopoly capitalism after the victory of the Chinese bourgeois revolution, then [the bourgeoisie could] avoid the socialist

⁴⁹ Wang Renzhi is a member of the CCP since 1950 and worked in the CCP Central Political Research Office and the Marxism-Leninism Institute during the 1960s. After the Cultural Revolution Wang became the director of the CCP Central Propaganda Department.

⁵⁰ Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, "Xinhai Geming qian zichanjieji geming pai he galiang pai de douzheng 辛亥革命前资产阶级革命派和改良派的斗争 [The Conflict between the Bourgeois Revolutionary Faction and Reform Faction Prior to the 1911 Revolution]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1962 (6): 35.

revolution against capitalism.⁵¹

Li wrote that Sun Yat-sen hoped to keep control of the revolution via a bourgeois version of socialism. According to historians who employed restrictive class analysis, the example of Sun Yat-sen could be seen as a warning: only class purity in leadership ensured the victory and continuation of the revolution. Historians, as they had begun to do in 1957, changed the portrayal of Sun Yat-sen from an example of revolutionary willpower and ideological evolution, into a warning against revisionism. The disavowal of a national hero like Sun Yat-sen supported Mao's criticism of the Soviet Union and his foreign policies that opposed the USSR. Moreover, these historians argued against their colleagues, and occasionally themselves, by portraying class conflict between the bourgeoisie and proletariat as antagonistic and inevitable in their historical narratives designed for foreign audiences. While historical narratives for domestic audiences reached a consensus allowing the bourgeoisie to participate but not lead the revolution, narratives for audiences outside China focused on maintaining the purity of the revolutionary classes. Mao's Cultural Revolution was in part a search to ensure this purity and prove that the bourgeoisie could not rise again in China's revolution.

III.D. Reassessing Nationalism and Class

The debate over the role of historical pedagogy in promoting nationalism shows that abstract debates over historical methodology were more contentious than debates over specific historical events. Prior to 1962, historians used the issue of the nationalist pedagogical uses of bourgeois figures to argue for the role of the bourgeoisie in the PRC. Between 1957 and 1961, historians also used the issue of nationalist pedagogy to assert China's uniqueness and legitimise the abandonment of the Soviet economic policies implemented in China.

After 1962, historians applying restrictive class analysis began to dominate the debate over the

⁵¹ Li Shu, *Makesizhuyi yu Zhongguo geming*, 79.

usefulness of non-proletarian figures in patriotic education. Radical historians argued that historical narratives should teach a nationalist history of only the proletariat and masses, and therefore a nationalism based on class. Other historians argued for the nationalist value of historical figures from classes outside of the masses to defend against the projection of the present onto the past. The debate between the two not only demonstrates how Mao's master narrative changed as Mao's goals shifted the focus of Mao Zedong Thought but also the polarisation of historical debate. Historians and radical intellectuals within the CCP attacked more conservative yet prominent colleagues on this issue. Only those colleagues who felt safe in their political status as Party members and those possessing powerful patrons dared to speak out against the radicals' conflation of nationalism and class. Yet it was that Party status of such historians that polarised the debate over nationalism and class; Mao polarised historical debate to attack Wu Han and his opinions as a means to implicate major CCP leaders like Liu Shaoqi.

Nationalism, to the radical historians writing between 1962 and 1965 who favoured a more restrictive version of class analysis, was only valuable so long as it served to exalt both nation *and* class. These historians valued only those traditions and historical figures which originated from the working or peasant masses or contributed to the ongoing task of socialist construction. A *Guangming Daily* review of an article published in *New Construction* said that the latter article correctly pointed out that the focus on nation over class harmed the revolution. The *Guangming Daily* editorial argued that:

The article [in *New Construction*] says that the criticism of heritage is one expression of class struggle. The 1911 Revolution did not solve this issue, nor did the May Fourth new culture movement. Chairman Mao found the correct resolution of this long-term issue, which had hung in the balance. Only through criticising historical relics with scientific and comprehensive historical materialism can we properly inherit the

beneficial traditions of our national culture, assure the health and development of the cultural revolution and the victory of the ideological revolution. Without criticism, there can be no true inheritance.⁵²

Criticism of Chinese heritage was not only the most important responsibility of the historian, according to this argument, but an expression of class analysis. Culture could not be wholly appropriated from the past; it must first pass through the sieve of class analysis to clean out all of the traditions which impeded the ongoing cultural and ideological revolutions. Zhang Kaizhi 张岂之 (1927-)⁵³ declared that those who supported the uncritical continuation of Chinese culture, specifically traditions such as Confucianism, were counterrevolutionaries who protected the dross of history and culture while throwing out the true essence. As evidence, Zhang used the examples of the Qing dynasty and the Beiyang Military to argue that reactionary leaders always used cultural and ideological attacks “to enslave the people’s spirits” with corrupt, feudal traditions such as Confucianism.⁵⁴ Any praise of the customs or history of the feudal or bourgeois classes in fact masked an attempt to ‘enslave the people’s spirits’ with that culture. The cultural and ideological battleground for the hearts of the people was just as important as the political battleground, therefore nationalism needed to be based upon both class and nation. Guan Feng 关锋 (1919-2005),⁵⁵ who went on to become a major figure in the first year of the Cultural Revolution, and his close friend Lin Yushi 林聿时 (d.u.)⁵⁶

⁵² “‘Xin Jianshe’ zai wen lun Xinhai Geming qian de guocuzhuyi sichao ‘新建设’ 载文论辛亥革命前的国粹主义思潮 [New Construction Publishes Article on the Narodnikist Tide before the 1911 Revolution]”, *Guangming ribao*, 12 March 1965.

⁵³ Zhang Kaizhi has been employed as a historian at the Northwest University since 1953 and is a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Chinese Ideological History unit. He has become particularly prominent after 1980.

⁵⁴ Zhang Kaizhi, “Fandui fengjian fuguzhuyi he zai sixiang shang de ‘yi ci da jiefang’ – guanyu jindai fugulun yu fanfugulun de yi duan lishi kaocha 反对封建复古主义和在思想上的‘一次大解放’ – 关于近代复古论与反复古论的一段历史考察 [Oppose Feudal Restorationism and ‘One Great Liberation’ Thought – A Historical Investigation on Modern Restorationism and Anti-Restorationism]”, in *Guangming ribao*, 28 February 1964.

⁵⁵ Guan Feng joined the CCP in 1933 and worked in the Central Research Department from 1956. He was made a member of the Cultural Revolution Group in 1966 but arrested and deposed in 1967. Guan was eventually rehabilitated in 1982.

⁵⁶ Lin Yushi was a close friend of Guan Feng who was persecuted in the Cultural Revolution for his links

argued that historians needed to be careful in noting the accomplishments of classes in the past. Addressing the critiques of their historicist colleagues, Guan and Lin wrote, "It is not contrary to historicism to add some appropriate criticism when affirming the historical progressiveness of the newly appearing feudal order or capitalist order.... If we do not criticise the newly appearing oppressive systems, we are not drawing a clear line between affirmation of the oppressing classes of the system [and affirmation of our own]".⁵⁷ Historians needed to place history in the context of the present, according to Guan and Lin, otherwise some might mistake the research of past class systems and figures as an endorsement of their ideology. These historians argued that only the culture of the masses could be patriotic and revolutionary, and any uncritical acknowledgement of the accomplishments or culture of other classes served the interests of those classes.

Not all historians agreed with the synthesis of class and nation made by those advocating restrictive class analysis. Some historians argued that any class opposed to imperialism had a place in the revolution and therefore in historical narratives, just as Mao had prior to 1949 when originally building his master narrative of history. Liu Danian wrote that:

Faced by their terrible national and class enemies, the Chinese people have consistently held feelings of revolutionary optimism and trust in victory. They have consistently shown revolutionary heroism and a dauntless revolutionary spirit. The intimidation and blackmail of imperialism have not made them lose heart; the mountain of daggers and sea of flames set by the enemy have not made them give up.... In the 110 years from the Opium War to the founding of the PRC, through the highs and lows, through raging seas and torrents, the Chinese people have never once

to Guan and released from prison in 1980.

⁵⁷ Guan Feng and Lin Yushi, "Zai lishi yanjiu zhong yunying jieji guandian he lishizhuyi de wenti 在历史研究中运用阶级观点和历史主义的问题 [Some Problems Applying Class Standpoints and Historicism to Historical Research]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1963 (6): 10.

stopped in their struggle for freedom and liberation against imperialism and its running dogs.... Under attack by the powerful masses, none of the running dogs of imperialism, from the Qing government to the Beiyang military government to Chiang Kai-shek's traitor group, could maintain a stable rule.⁵⁸

Liu's analysis grouped class and socialism into a second order of importance, below the first order of nationalism and anti-imperialism. Liu Danian was not joined by many of his colleagues, who instead either saw benefit in joining the radical camp or who attempted to protect themselves by not participating in this clearly political debate. Liu fell afoul of the Cultural Revolution for this, and other, stances on history, attacked by the radicals like Guan Feng who engaged him in these polarised debates prior to 1965. The debate over the relationship between patriotism and class paralleled the larger debate over the relative importance of theory versus facts in historical research, which became so polarised that it factored into the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

IV. Mao's Master Narrative during the Cultural Revolution

The ten-year span of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution consisted of many waves and reversals as different factions within the CCP and within society attacked the others. One constant was Mao himself, whose caprices, or at least whatever those close to him interpreted as his caprices, led the Cultural Revolution down each step of its path. The other constant was the complete politicisation of life.⁵⁹ History, like all fields of life, became completely politicised during the Cultural Revolution to serve Mao's goals,⁶⁰ and historians used this politicisation to pursue both political as well as personal goals. Some historians used the Cultural Revolution to

⁵⁸ Liu Danian, "Diguo zhuyi dui Zhongguo de qinlüe yu Zhongguo renmin fandui diguo zhuyi de douzheng 帝国主义对中国的侵略与中国人民反对帝国主义的斗争 [Imperialist Invasion of China and the Chinese People's Struggle against Imperialism]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1964 (4): 109-112.

⁵⁹ Ji, *Linguistic Engineering*, 101-102; Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 242. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "History and Truth in Chinese Marxist Historiography", 444-5.

⁶⁰ Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*, 218.

attack their senior or higher-ranked colleagues and open positions for themselves.⁶¹ Others, including radicals like Guan Feng and Qi Benyu 戚本禹 (1931-2016),⁶² participated in the political debates and fighting which occurred at the centre of the Party to claim political power for themselves. Most historians, however, neglected historical research to protect themselves from accusations of holding or supporting bourgeois ideology. The main journal for historical research throughout the PRC, *Historical Research*, ceased publication entirely for the duration of the Cultural Revolution.⁶³ The CCP ceased publication of any new books, focusing solely on the re-publication of approved works like Mao's *Selected Works*⁶⁴ or Wu Yuzhang's *The 1911 Revolution*.⁶⁵ While questions of the narration of history largely faded away during the Cultural Revolution, the historically based attacks on Wu Han that signalled the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1965, show that history played a significant role in political debate.⁶⁶

The Cultural Revolution was Mao's attempt to regain the power he perceived as lost after the Great Leap Forward. Liu Shaoqi and others in the CCP reversed many of the policies Mao made during the Great Leap Forward after 1961, and often reverted to recommencing the implementation of Soviet-style economic policies to rebuild the country. Mao feared the revisionism of the USSR and the possibility that China would 'de-Maoise' as the USSR had 'de-Stalinised'. The Cultural Revolution marked Mao's attempt to remove those he saw as revisionists from the CCP and thus preserve his own power. Mao's concerns over his personal standing and power, however, detracted from the creation of new systems to institutionalise the Cultural Revolution.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Goldman, *China's Intellectuals*, 61; Albert Feuerwerker, "Preface", in Feuerwerker, *History in Communist China*, viii-ix; Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "Chinese Historical Writing since 1949", 624.

⁶² Qi Benyu joined the CCP in 1949 and was editor of the Party journal *Red Flag*. He was a member of the Cultural Revolution Group along with Guan Feng, and similarly arrested in 1968, yet he was only discharged in 1986.

⁶³ Feuerwerker, "Preface", viii-ix.

⁶⁴ Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution*, 97-98.

⁶⁵ Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai Geming 辛亥革命* [*The 1911 Revolution*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1974).

⁶⁶ Harrison, *The Communists and Chinese Peasant Rebellions*, 236-237.

⁶⁷ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, 242; Harding, *Organizing China*, 263-266.

Mao's health, furthermore, was rapidly declining, thus the Cultural Revolution was also Mao's attempt to ensure the ideological purity of China's next generation. Mao believed that the Chinese youth needed the experience of struggling against, and eliminating bourgeois ideology, to ensure their ideological purity and thus prevent the rise of revisionism. Due to the experience of the Great Leap Forward and the reversals of his policies, Mao gave up on notions of economic development leading to socialism, and instead believed that society could progress only through constant struggle against class contradictions. Mao emphasised the importance of ideological contradictions and argued that as soon as one contradiction was resolved another appeared. The focus on ideology, however, led to the excesses of the cult of Mao during the Cultural Revolution. Mao created Mao Zedong Thought during the War against Japan to ensure that the ongoing revolution relied on his leadership, and during the Cultural Revolution Mao and his associates took this to an extreme. Only Mao's words held any value and Mao himself was the sole arbiter of determining correct from incorrect ideology.

Radical historians projected contemporary contradictions onto historical narratives by writing the proletariat into the centre of all historical events and denying the role of the historical bourgeoisie. These radical historians agreed with Mao that remnants of bourgeois culture and history served the interests of the bourgeoisie. Historians 'modernised' the past not just to read the narrative of proletarian leadership into the past, but to remove the traces of bourgeois history and culture that led to the adoption of bourgeois ideology and therefore revisionism. They modified Mao's master narrative and shifted the relative importance of the themes of Mao Zedong Thought to support Mao's goals during the Cultural Revolution. The spread of this modified narrative across China to support the ideological education of the new generation, however, ended in failure.

This section covers three aspects of historiography during the Cultural Revolution to show how radical historians used historical narratives to attack Mao's enemies and redefine Mao's

master narrative of history to suit his goals during the Cultural Revolution. Historians and politicians supporting the new narrative rarely engaged in explanation or debate on how the narrative applied to the specifics of the history of the 1911 Revolution or other historical events. Mao and the radicals purged intellectuals rather than educating them as they had in Yan'an, meaning that instead of reasserting the master narrative and unifying the Party, Mao's master narrative fell into decline. The first section shows how historical narratives and debates led to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution as radicals attacked Wu Han on the issue of 'theory versus data' and whether a historian's choices in narrating history was proof of bourgeois ideology. The second section follows Mao's intensification of the importance of ideological contradictions in his master narrative of history. The last section tracks the lessons that other historians and radical politicians took from Mao's theory of perpetual contradictions, and the effect it had on the lessons of the 1911 Revolution, both within and beyond China.

IV.A. Historical Narratives and the Beginning of the Cultural Revolution

This section covers two debates among historians that marked the opening salvos of the Cultural Revolution: the debate over theory versus facts and whether historical narratives in China were still propagating bourgeois ideology. In the first, radical historians chose to attack Wu Han over the debate between theory and facts, not only to target Liu Shaoqi through Wu Han but also to resolve many of the historical debates which had been ongoing since the foundation of the PRC, such as the evaluation of historical figures and the role of nationalism in education. In the second debate, I will examine how Mao and the radicals accused the entire historical profession—as well as other cultural professions—of propagating bourgeois ideology and culture to turn the narration of history into an ideological battleground. Mao defined culture and historiography as a part of the ideological struggle to resolve the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie.

IV.A.1. Wu Han and the Debate on Theory versus Facts

One of the most vociferous debates in the historical studies field between 1962 and 1965 was the debate about historicism, or the debate on the relative importance of theory versus facts. Historians had debated this topic throughout the history of the PRC, even coming to violence once before during the Anti-Rightist Movement,⁶⁸ but the era just prior to and during the Cultural Revolution marked a major turning point in this debate.⁶⁹ This period and point of debate marked a crystallisation of all the other debates and campaigns within the field of historical studies.⁷⁰ At the heart of the debate were more abstract questions of historical methodology, pedagogy and purpose, such as the questions of how to teach history, how to conduct research and the role of the historian. The debate began in earnest after Wu Yuzhang claimed that all history produced by other classes was untrustworthy during his introductory remarks at the 50th Anniversary Conference on the 1911 Revolution. In his opening statement, Wu argued that history written by bourgeois figures served the interests of the bourgeoisie and therefore that only proletarian historians could write history in service of socialism and the proletariat.⁷¹

Wu and other historians, after 1961, followed the implication of the method of restrictive class analysis to its natural conclusion and argued that the sources or facts of history were untrustworthy because of the class background of the writers, and therefore that only theory could lead the study of history. Liu Danian wrote in a 1962 article that, “All studies of questions in every concrete domain touch on important questions of theory”.⁷² The only way to understand history as it really happened was through the understanding and application of theory to critique the sources of the past and distil from them the real facts, rather than those

⁶⁸ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “History and Truth”, 424.

⁶⁹ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, “On Shi and Lun”, 74-95.

⁷⁰ Dirlik, “The Problem of Class Viewpoint versus Historicism in Chinese Historiography”, 465-488.

⁷¹ Wu Yuzhang, “Zai Xinhai Geming xueshu taolunhui shang de jianghua”, 2.

⁷² Liu Danian, “Xin Zhongguo de lishi kexue 新中国的历史科学 [New China’s Historical Science]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1962 (2): 3.

presented by the classes that had previously narrated history. Zhang Kaizhi used the example of reactionaries after the 1911 Revolution to argue that:

The dregs of Chinese cultural heritage... these long-enduring tools of feudal rulers used to enslave the spirit of the people, were exactly those things which the restorationist faction welcomed and applauded after the 1911 Revolution. The [faction's] forte was therefore to slander those progressive ideologues who dared to use history to criticise heritage and [advocate] renewal. While the [restorationist faction] held on to the ghost of Confucius and paid abnormal attention to the 'national essence', in reality it propagated the dregs and slandered the essence, opposed renewal and cruelly trampled on real cultural heritage.⁷³

Zhang claimed in this work that historical works and sources produced by non-proletarian authors bore the imprint and served the interests of the author's class, and were therefore untrustworthy. More importantly, Zhang argued that such restorationists who hid bourgeois or feudal viewpoints behind the guise of supporting national traditions, still existed in contemporary China. Liu Danian and Zhang Kaizhi each argued that historicism served the interests of the bourgeoisie by protecting its historical narratives and therefore spreading bourgeois ideology in the contemporary PRC. Liu and Zhang targeted historicism not only to attack Wu Han as a proxy target for Liu Shaoqi, but also to resolve the long-standing historical debate between facts and theory.

Wu Han was among the few to write against the excessive influence of theory over facts, though he did so forcefully and frequently. Wu admitted that source criticism remained an important skill for the historian but that without any trust in the sources, no history could exist

⁷³ Zhang Kaizhi, "Fandui fengjian fuguzhuyi he zai sixiang shang de 'yi ci da jiefang' – guanyu jindai fugulun yu fanfugulun de yi duan lishi kaocha".

at all. In a 1962 speech to other Beijing-based historians, Wu argued that:

To completely distrust [books] is to not have history.... You could say that every book bears a class imprint. Others say that since all [books] serve a class, nothing of what they record can be trusted. Feudal historians slandered, covered up, and misreported the people's uprisings and their inventions, this is natural. The *Draft History of the Qing* [*Qing shi gao* 清史稿] called the 1911 Revolution an 'uprising of thieves in Wuchang'. In the records of the Nationalist Party, they cursed the CCP as 'commie bandits'. For them to call the CCP good was unimaginable! But can we learn something from this: are all history books untrustworthy? This would be a dangerous conclusion because to negate everything can only lead to national nihilism.... When dealing with historical materials, therefore, one should analyse them. To completely distrust is not acceptable: to completely trust on faith is also unacceptable. One should do the job of examination and must differentiate the trustworthy from the untrustworthy.⁷⁴

According to Wu Han, the role of a historian and the purpose of a historian's training in both theory and research was to criticise sources and pick out the factual from the non-factual; to unravel the false narratives of the past which served an exploiter class; and to find the facts and reweave that data into a new, proletarian narrative. Applying so restrictive a vision of class analysis that nothing produced by exploiter classes could be trusted, led to the loss of history, to national nihilism. While finding value in theory, Wu thought that historians who replaced facts with theory ended up producing fallacious and useless historical narratives:

Not long ago there was a tendency for 'using theory to lead history' 以论带史 [*yi lun*

⁷⁴ Wu Han, "Guanyu yanjiu lishi de ji ge wenti 关于研究历史的几个问题 [A Few Problems on the Research of History]", in *Wu Han shixue lunzhu xuan ji* 吴晗史学论著选集 [*Wu Han's Selected Historical Works*], v. 3, ed. Beijing shi lishi xuehui 北京市历史学会 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1988), 446-447.

dai shi']. To emphasise theory is right, but the formulation needed consideration because just looking at the obvious characters, putting theory first and history after, resulted in more theory than history, even to the point where there was only theory and no history. [Some] substituted the character for 'lead [*dai* 帶]' with [the homophone] 'replace [*dai* 代]' for the resultant 'use theory to replace history 以论代史 [*yi lun dai shi*]'. One work called, *On the 1911 Revolution*,⁷⁵ was under 100,000 characters, was all theory from the classical authors from start to finish and rarely ever talked of the concrete history of the 1911 Revolution. This is a representative example. Everyone knows that theory can only lead historical research, it cannot replace concrete historical reality.⁷⁶

Wu argued that theory helped organise the data and provide a narrative for history, but that it could not stand on its own.

Wu advocated historicism—grounding understanding of historical events and figures in the context of their times—and opposed restrictive class analysis. Wu's focus was twofold: to maintain the professionalism of historical studies, and produce history useful to the Party and the nation. Wu was concerned that by allowing historians to apply contemporary narratives of class conflict to history, the lessons of history would be distorted and lead to policy mistakes. His position on historicism was not just a professional difference of opinion but a fundamental disagreement on how the historian should serve politics.⁷⁷ Wu was persecuted during the

⁷⁵ Refers to Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai Geming* (1961), in which the first half was entitled *Lun Xinhai Geming* 论辛亥革命 [*On the 1911 Revolution*] and consisted of Wu's history of the 1911 Revolution. The second half was made up of Wu's memoirs from the event. The volume was republished during the Cultural Revolution; Wu Yuzhang, *Xinhai Geming* (1974).

⁷⁶ Wu Han, "Ruhe xuexi lishi 如何学习历史 [How to Study History]", *Guangming ribao*, 4 January 1962.

⁷⁷ Pusey does not attribute belief in Marxism to Wu Han and argues that Wu argued mostly for professional independence for historians, but does agree that Wu Han and radical historians held fundamentally different views of the role of historical narratives in politics; Pusey, *Wu Han*, 66-67. Fisher concludes similarly, arguing that Wu Han viewed history "as a medium for raising social and political consciousness"; Fisher, "The Play's the Thing", 26-7. Ahn, however, argues that Wu Han intentionally addressed political issues through his works; Ahn, "The Politics of Peking Opera, 1962-1965", 1067.

Cultural Revolution for advocating that facts lead theory⁷⁸ because his radical opponents argued that the debate over historicism was an expression of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Radicals accused Wu of defending bourgeois ideology and therefore advocating for bourgeois restoration in the PRC. Radicals thus made historicism a political crime and implicated Wu Han's superiors, such as Liu Shaoqi, for protecting supporters of bourgeois ideology.

IV.A.2. The Narration of History as an Ideological Battleground

Radical historians between 1962 and 1965 argued that the narration of history was an ideological battleground in the fight against bourgeois ideology; therefore, historians who opposed the projection of the present onto of the past must necessarily be protecting bourgeois ideology. This connection between historical narratives and bourgeois ideology played a significant role in justifying the political attacks on historians during the Cultural Revolution. Mao's remarks never to forget class struggle emboldened historians to pursue this debate further and led to polarisation between radical historians who supported restrictive class analysis and historicists. The radicals argued that historiography was a battleground in the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and served not only to end the debate among historians, but to support Mao's calls for a Cultural Revolution against hidden bourgeois elements in the PRC.

One of the most important reasons cited by historians to teach the history of other classes was to establish the historical foundations of the present. Without an adequate understanding of the past, and of the conflicts which defined the past, any understanding of the contemporary times and the challenges facing the contemporary revolution would be flawed. The 1911 Revolution, according to these authors, held many useful lessons for the ongoing revolution despite the bourgeois leadership of 1911. One argument supporting this opinion came from

⁷⁸ Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, "On Shi and Lun", 81-82.

an unexpected source: Qi Benyu, who later joined the Cultural Revolution Group⁷⁹ which led the early phases of the Cultural Revolution, encouraged research into what he called ‘the other side of the contradiction’:

Some people... assume that they cannot study the aristocracy. This is incorrect. Not only should we seriously research the prominent figures from among the aristocracy, it is the most reactionary among them who deserve our serious research. The key to the problem is to use a proletarian standpoint and methods to conduct research. The book [*Introducing*] *The Great Traitor and Thief Yuan Shikai* was written about one of the most reactionary figures from the recent aristocracy. Because the author [Chen Boda, also a later member of the Cultural Revolution group] used a proletarian standpoint and methods to conduct research, he not only wrote about the particularities of the activities of a representative figure from a reactionary class, but through this reactionary figure wrote a historical truth about the contemporary time [of publication]. The history of class society is a history of class struggle. To understand the history of class struggle, both sides of the class contradiction must be researched. To fail to research properly the other side of the contradiction, the aristocracy or other reactionary representatives, means one cannot understand half the contradiction.⁸⁰

History was the story of the development of class struggle to Qi, but every struggle had two sides and both required research. Qi applied restrictive class analysis to understand the historical contributions of each class and argued for the need for historians to compare all

⁷⁹ The Central Cultural Revolution Group (*Zhongyang Wen Ge xiaozu* 中央文革小组) formed in 1966 to replace the existing organisations and groups tasked with carrying out Politburo policy and investigating the need for a cultural revolution. The group directed much of the early Cultural Revolution, including encouraging the Red Guards. The group, but not all its members, fell in late 1967 after the People's Liberation Army intervened in the Cultural Revolution to end the armed battles between Red Guard groups and began taking an active role in the governance of the PRC.

⁸⁰ Qi Benyu, “Wei geming er yanjiu lishi 为革命而研究历史 [Research History for the Revolution]”, *Lishi yanjiu* 1965 (6): 35.

historical accomplishments to the greater accomplishments of the present socialist era. He also argued that historians must understand reactionaries and their ideologies in order to defeat them.

Wu Han, who was later criticised for historicism by Qi Benyu, also argued that the history of movements led by other classes still served as lessons for the present. Wu argued that the assessment of historical figures and events could teach the present through negative examples. He wrote, "Take for example the 1911 Revolution; politically speaking there was no clear anti-imperial, anti-feudal call and organisationally it did not incite the masses, these are the main reasons for its failure. These lessons were written in blood, the failure of the predecessor to teach those who came after".⁸¹ While both Qi and Wu argued for the necessity of understanding the past in order to comprehend the present, each argued the point in different ways. Qi argued from the perspective of restrictive class analysis and stated that only by understanding all the classes in a contradiction could historians fully understand that contradiction. Wu, arguing without restrictive class analysis, stated that all historical experiences afforded lessons for the present. Whether applying restrictive class analysis or historicism, both Qi and Wu agreed that history served the present by informing and teaching the present. Others, however, did not even agree with this assessment, and viewed history as an ideological battleground where historians from classes opposed to the revolution hid their reactionary views behind historical narratives to corrupt the youth and endanger the revolution.

Other historians who supported restrictive class analysis argued that bourgeois ideologies remained prominent throughout the world, so the purpose of historical research was to eliminate the propagation of bourgeois ideology, thus ensuring the transmission of proletarian viewpoints. History was not an academic pursuit, but a crucial component of the global

⁸¹ Wu Han, "Lun lishi renwu pingjia".

socialist movement where proletarian historians struggled against bourgeois historians and bourgeois ideology. Liu Danian argued that, “The historical researchers of new China see their job as a component part of the battlefield of socialist revolutionary ideology. Our research on every type of question is all for one purpose: to enter into a life-or-death struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie through historical science, to strengthen the position of Marxist and socialist ideology while exterminating bourgeois ideology”.⁸² In another work Liu wrote that, “The bourgeois viewpoints of exceeding class and opposing the people are quite common in foreign bourgeois edited works.... We must increase our criticism of the reactionary thought propagated in this domain by foreign bourgeoisie, and moreover clearly and correctly explain China’s classes and class struggle to purge the influence of [the viewpoints of the bourgeoisie]”.⁸³ According to Liu, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat in the historical sphere was a struggle where the battlelines did not run through China. While Chinese historians needed to guard against the importation of bourgeois ideology through foreign works of history, bourgeois ideology did not originate from Chinese sources. Liu Danian’s argument that the battle was between domestic socialist and foreign bourgeois ideologies set him against more radical historians and made Liu a target of the Cultural Revolution.

Following Mao’s 1962 claim that class struggle still occurred within the PRC, some historians argued that class struggle took place constantly and in both domestic and international spheres. Some historians began to build this narrative just prior to the Cultural Revolution, and targeted their peers for persecution by arguing that the narration of history was one battleground in the ongoing class struggle within the PRC. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, Wu Rennian 武任年 (d.u.) wrote a criticism of Wu Han in the important historical journal *Historical Research*, which summarised historiography in China as a battleground

⁸² Liu Danian, “Shiwu nian lai Zhongguo de lish yanjiu gongzuo”, 245.

⁸³ Liu Danian, “Zhongguo jindaishi zhu wenti”, 8.

where the international struggle between imperialism and socialism was reflected domestically. Wu wrote:

In 1956-1957, class struggle intensified in the international arena as the reactionary counter-current ran wild. Class struggle in the international arena was reflected domestically, and the domestic class struggle was also reflected in the territory of the historical studies world.... [Reactionary historians] advocated an idealist historical viewpoint, opposing the materialist view of history. Their attacks were quickly dispersed by the people's forces, yet the struggle still continues. Remnants of the bourgeoisie and feudal ruling class are looking for their new representative, looking for a new opportunity and form by which to struggle.⁸⁴

Reactionary historians not only sought to advance bourgeois historical viewpoints, according to Wu Rennian, they were remnants of class forces which still threatened the political stability of the PRC. The debates that occurred in the historical studies field were reflections of larger domestic and international class struggles. So long as any bourgeois or feudal elements remained in China, those elements would look for ways to undermine the ideology of the proletariat, the leadership of the CCP and the independence of China. Wu Rennian used the example of historical debates within the PRC to support Mao's fear of revisionism, and the leader's call for the Cultural Revolution to ensure the ideological purity of the next generation of Chinese youth. Only by winning the battle over historical narration and culture could the PRC eliminate bourgeois ideology, resolve the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and advance to the next era of the socialist revolution.

Historicists like Wu Han and historians who applied restrictive class analysis, engaged in a

⁸⁴ Wu Rennian, "Ping Wu Han de fan dang fan shehuizhuyi fan Makeshizhuyi de lishi renwu pingjia 评吴晗的反党反社会主义反马克思主义的历史人物评价 [A Criticism of Wu Han's anti-Party anti-Socialist anti-Marxist Evaluation of Historical Figures]", *Lishi yanjiu* 1966 (2): 35.

polarised debate over the relative importance of facts versus theory, and over the narration of history as an ideological battleground. Mao and the radicals chose to polarise these pre-existing historical debates to target Wu Han and other historians for persecution, and through them target other members of higher standing within the CCP. While historical debates served ulterior motives for Mao and the radicals aligned with him, these debates represent the distillation of most historical debates in the PRC down to the single issue of facts versus theory. The evaluation of historical figures, periodisation and the nationalist pedagogical uses of historical figures all condensed into the single debate of facts versus theory. The attack on Wu Han was not just a step in the political struggle between Mao and Liu Shaoqi, but also an attack on historical narratives that no longer supported Mao's goals and the conclusion of the polarisation of historical discourse in the PRC.

IV.B. Mao's Intensification of Contradictions in his Master Narrative of History

Beginning in 1965, Mao Zedong used his platform at several CCP conferences to alter his master narrative of Chinese history and present a theory of perpetual class contradictions. Mao's intensification of contradictions built on the method of restrictive class analysis which emerged between 1957 and 1965, yet also departed from it in ways that left some of its core supporters vulnerable to attack during the Cultural Revolution. Unlike his foray into the narration of history in the 1940s while in Yan'an, Mao and his supporters relied on the elimination, rather than rectification of rival narratives through personal attacks on historians. This failure to apply the lessons of the Yan'an Rectification Movement resulted in the failure of the new narrative to take hold. This section looks at how and why Mao and his core supporters redefined the role of contradictions in the periodisation of history and specifically at the role the historiography of the 1911 Revolution played in altering Mao's master narrative.

Periodisation played a significant role in defining Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master

narrative of history during the War against Japan when Mao created the periodisation of New Democracy to legitimise his United Front policy. After the 1949 foundation of the PRC, historians debated the periodisation of history to support the adoption of the Soviet economic model of development in China. After 1957 historians debated such question as how many contradictions existed in a period, how to resolve contradictions, which contradiction defined the period of modern Chinese history and how external forces impacted the domestic class contradiction. General agreement existed among historians that the periodisation of history should be based on the resolution of fundamental class contradictions, even among historians opposed to restrictive class analysis.

Mao, however, reopened the debate and argued that class contradictions continued perpetually, and that the resolution of each new contradiction contributed to the advancement of society. In doing so, Mao changed his stance on non-antagonistic contradictions and altered Mao Zedong Thought to target his opponents in the CCP. Mao argued for the perpetual resolution and emergence of contradictions, specifically in order to target Wu Han and Liu Shaoqi and to attack other interpretations of contradictions, some of which Mao had supported previously. The attack on Liu Shaoqi first went through Wu Han and other historicists. Mao spoke out against Wu Han and Jian Bozan at the December 1965 Hangzhou conference and specifically attacked Jian for his historical narratives and theory of 'concessionary policies'.⁸⁵ Citing the movie, *Secret History of the Qing Palace*,⁸⁶ and its

⁸⁵ Pusey summarised Jian's opinions as the theory that feudal rulers could and did grant concessions to the people and raise their livelihood to protect their own rule; Pusey, *Wu Han*, 65. Jian Bozan first put forward the idea of concessionary policies in 1951; Jian Bozan, "Zhongguo gudai de nongmin zhanzheng 中国古代的农民战争 [Peasant Wars in Ancient China]", *Xuexi 学习 [Study]* v. 3, n. 10 (16 Feb 1951): 6-8. Jian was criticised by Mao for this theory; Mao Zedong, "Zai Hangzhou de tanhua 在杭州的谈话 [Mao's Speech in Hangzhou]", 21 December 1965, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*. Other historians elaborated on Mao's criticism of Jian in the *People's Daily*; Qi Benyu, Lin Jie 林杰, and Yan Changgui 阎长贵, "Jian Bozan tongzhi de lishi guandian yingdang pipan 翦伯赞同志的历史观点应当批判 [Comrade Jian Bozan's Historical Viewpoints Should be Criticised]," *Renmin ribao*, 25 March 1966, accessed in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

⁸⁶ *Secret History of the Qing Palace* 清宫秘史 was a movie produced in the late 1940s and shown exclusively in Beijing for a few viewings in March 1950. The movie portrayed the Qing court and its responses to the Hundred Days Reform and the Boxer Rebellion. It went largely unremarked upon in national papers, though was banned for its content. Zhou Yang did remark in a 1954 editorial which

portrayal of the Guangxu Emperor and Kang Youwei, Mao told his listeners to, “Study recent history, then one can see, where are the ‘concessionary policies’? There is only the concession between revolutionary forces and counterrevolutionaries, and counterrevolutionaries will always counterattack. Every time a new dynasty emerges in history, it adopts a policy of light service and taxes because the people are so poor there is nothing to take. This policy of light service and taxes benefits the landlord class”.⁸⁷ Earlier in the same speech Mao asked, “Is not the course of history the unification of contradictions? Modern history is unceasing one separating into two, unceasing struggle.... Before the 1911 Revolution, there was the struggle between Sun Yat-sen and Kang Youwei. The 1911 Revolution overthrew the monarchy, and then there was the struggle between Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai. Afterwards there was constant struggle and splintering within the Nationalist Party”.⁸⁸ Mao suggested that contradictions took place even within political structures representing a narrow set of class interests. Mao did not stop his analysis at the Nationalist Party, however, and applied this law of perpetual contradictions even to the CCP. Mao remarked earlier in 1965 that, “Inside classes there are contradictions and struggle. Among the people there are contradictions and struggle. Within the Party there are disputes, contradictions and struggle. Yet none are separate from class struggle. Last October I said in Beijing, if Beijing were to become revisionist, then what? Would I not study [the example of] Cai E’s rebellion to take down Yuan Shikai?”⁸⁹ Class struggle permeated all history and all contemporary life; every expression of politics and every personal dispute could be considered a part of class struggle. Mao changed

appeared in both the *People’s Daily* and *Guangming Daily* that the film deserved to be criticised as it was akin to the much more heavily criticised *Life of Wu Xun*; Zhou Yang, “Women bixu zhandou 我们必须战斗 [We Must Struggle]”, *Renmin ribao*, 10 January 1954, 3. During the Cultural Revolution Zhou Yang, Liu Shaoqi and others were criticised for protecting the film and its counterrevolutionary content. Schoenhals noted that Qi Benyu’s attack on the film was one of the first salvos launched directly against Liu Shaoqi; Michael Schoenhals, ed., *China’s Cultural Revolution 1966-1969: Not a Dinner Party* (London: Routledge, 2015), 102.

⁸⁷ Mao Zedong, “Zai Hangzhou de tanhua”.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Mao Zedong, “Zai tingqu zhongnanju huibao gongzuo shi de chahua 在听取中南局汇报工作时的插话 [Mao’s remarks while hearing the work report of the CCP Central-South Bureau],” 12 January 1965, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*. Cai E led the Second Revolution against Yuan Shikai in Sichuan.

his interpretation of contradictions and periodisation to justify his attacks on his colleagues within the CCP. Mao's pessimism and desire to purge those he saw as revisionist led him to see the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat as antagonistic, impacting every part of Chinese society, from politics to the historical profession.⁹⁰ Historical narratives of the 1911 Revolution played a role in explaining Mao's redefinition of contradictions by offering an example of the unceasing emergence of new contradictions and of contradictions within political parties. Mao's use of historical narratives to redefine contradictions, moreover, validated the attack on historicists like Wu Han and Wu's patrons in the CCP who Mao's real targets were.

IV.C. The Lessons of the 1911 Revolution for the Perpetual Revolution

The spread of Mao's redefinition of contradictions in his master narrative during the Cultural Revolution repeated none of the steps taken in Yan'an. Rather than educate and unify, Mao and the radicals purged historicists from the CCP in pursuit of Mao's goals and because the radicals portrayed the narration of history as an ideological battleground. In Yan'an, Mao used historical narratives during the Rectification Movement to build belief in Mao Zedong Thought and create unity within the CCP. Participants in the Rectification Movement then wrote their own personal histories according to Mao Zedong Thought and situated them within his master narrative, as illustrated by the 10 October 1941 edition of the *Liberation Daily*. By following Mao's master narrative of history and his account of the 1911 Revolution historians and politicians supported the political goals those narratives served, including the policy of the United Front and Mao's leadership over the CCP. The Cultural Revolution repeated none of these steps. The Hundred Flowers Movement showed the failure of thought reform

⁹⁰ Meisner argued that Mao's idea of permanent revolution was seeded in his early life and experience, but found expression only around the Great Leap Forward as he sought to reconcile the means and ends of the revolution, envisioning permanent revolution as new class contradictions continually arose, were resolved, and produced new ones; Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*. Levy argued similarly that Mao was unique within the CCP as viewing class struggle within socialism: Levy, "Mao, Marx, Political Economy and the Chinese Revolution", 165.

throughout the 1950s to remake the intellectuals, and the further eroding of Mao's power after the failure of the Great Leap Forward suggested to Mao that contradictions could only be resolved antagonistically.

During the Cultural Revolution, historians between 1957 and 1965 identified two lessons of the 1911 Revolution for the contemporary revolution. The two lessons that historians found instructive were the danger of counterrevolutionary restoration and the threat of bourgeois elements hiding within the revolution, particularly within academia. Radical historians preferred to persecute, rather than rectify their colleagues during the Cultural Revolution which led to the failure to spread Mao's modified master narrative. Historians writing during the Cultural Revolution applied Mao's intensification of contradictions to the lessons of the 1911 Revolution identified prior to 1965: Chinese leadership of the global socialist revolution and the need to prevent revisionist restoration.

The first lesson Mao's supporters derived from the history of the 1911 Revolution during the Cultural Revolution, was the possibility for revolutionary failure and counterrevolutionary restoration. Developing the assumptions made by restrictive class analysis—that class analysis determined the contributions of historical classes and that the historical contributions of classes needed to be judged according to contemporary class relations—these political actors used Mao's theory of perpetual class contradictions to argue that defeated classes still posed an existential threat to the PRC. Guan Feng and his close friend Wu Zhuanqi 吴传启 (d.u.) argued that movements to restore feudal ethics were forerunners of the political restoration of reactionary classes. Guan and Wu argued that, "Every time this sort of reactionary tide is exposed and criticised, the bad things become good and it advances the arrival of a new revolutionary high tide, preparing the ideological grounds for the advance of the revolution".⁹¹

⁹¹ Guan Feng and Wu Zhuanqi, "Lun Wu Han tongzhi de Daodelun 论吴晗同志的道德论 [On the Moralism of Comrade Wu Han]", 19 March 1966, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*. Also published in *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲学研究 [*Philosophical Research*] 1966, no. 1, and *Renmin ribao*, 19 March

Guan and Wu argued that counterrevolutionaries posed a danger to the ongoing revolution but so long as they were exposed and criticised, then the dangers could be overcome and moreover used to push the revolution forwards. Defeat through debate about incorrect ideologies led to social advancements. This stance quickly became outdated as Mao's other supporters, such as Lin Biao 林彪 (1907-1971)⁹² and the Red Guards,⁹³ found value only in violence against counterrevolutionaries rather than engaging them in criticism and debate.

Lin Biao used examples from history several times during 1966 to argue that the contemporary PRC needed to be vigilant against counterrevolutionary restorations. At one meeting of other CCP leaders, Lin argued that:

During the 1911 Revolution Sun Yat-sen became President, yet Yuan Shikai stole power after three months. Four years later, Yuan Shikai became emperor, and was overthrown. Afterwards came the warlord period.... Chiang Kai-shek incited a counterrevolutionary takeover and usurped military power, party power and political power, then began massacring the revolutionary people. These historical counterrevolutionary takeovers should shock us to the core and warn us to maintain a high degree of vigilance.⁹⁴

History provided many instances of counterrevolutionary restoration, so according to Lin's use of restrictive class analysis, not only was the bourgeoisie untrustworthy but its existence

1966.

⁹² Lin Biao was one of the highest-ranking generals during the Second Civil War against the Nationalist Party but avoided taking any major political role after the foundation of the PRC due to his poor health. Lin replaced Peng Dehuai as Defence Minister after Peng's rebuttal of Mao at the Lushan Plenum and in 1969 following the fall of Liu Shaoqi he became Mao's successor. He died in a plane crash under mysterious circumstances.

⁹³ The Red Guards (*hongweibing* 红卫兵) were groups of mostly school age students who took up Mao Zedong's calls to take over control of the CCP from revisionists and thoroughly eliminate all traces of old culture. Much of the violence of the Cultural Revolution was perpetrated by the Red Guard groups.

⁹⁴ Lin Biao, "Zai zhongyang zhengzhi ju kuoda huiyi shang de jianghua 在中央政治局扩大会议上的讲话 [Lin Biao's Speech at an Enlarged Session of the CCP CC Politburo]", 18 May 1966, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

actively endangered the PRC. Lin said in a later speech:

How can a socialist country degrade into a capitalist restoration? How can we stop [a socialist country] from changing? We must thoroughly research this question. After the accomplishment of a socialist revolution in a country, there can be a restoration. Before we were unclear on this issue but now we have Yugoslavia and the USSR to raise our awareness. Chairman Mao chose a means to prevent capitalist restoration, this is the Cultural Revolution. There have also been restorations going from feudal society to capitalist society.... China from the Hundred Days Reform to Yuan Shikai, to Chiang Kai-shek has seen restorations. Whenever a society transitions to another [type of] society, the old society will never leave the stage of history on its own, it always counterattacks.⁹⁵

Of the historians who applied restrictive class analysis prior to the Cultural Revolution, only a subset believed that domestic forces within the PRC actively threatened the nation, and even those historians viewed the conflict as an ideological contradiction. Lin's view was a development of the position of this small group of historians who applied restrictive class analysis before 1965, as well as an extension Mao's 1965 remarks on perpetual class contradictions. Lin expanded on the idea that the historical profession within the contemporary PRC was a site of ongoing class struggle, and argued that the entire PRC, inclusive of the CCP, was the locus of the class contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie. To Lin Biao, the violence and drama of the Cultural Revolution was the proletariat defending itself from a reactionary counterattack.

After the fall of Guan Feng,⁹⁶ one Red Guard group in Beijing revisited the issue of feudal

⁹⁵ Lin Biao, "Zai taolun gongchang 'shi tiao' shi de jianghua 在讨论工矿'十条'时的讲话 [Lin Biao's Speech at a Forum on the 'Ten Articles' Concerning the Manufacturing and Mining Industries]", 4 December 1966, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

⁹⁶ Guan Feng and Qi Benyu were both cast as too extremely leftist and allowed to fall by other power

ideology and argued for a bleaker view of the relationship between counterrevolutionary ideology and the fate of the revolution. The group wrote that, “After [a reactionary exploiter class] is overthrown, it again raises the feudal instrument of Confucius, like a vampire, to attempt to draw support from its effect on society and prepare public opinion for a counterrevolutionary restoration. To speak of [events] not so long ago, during the traitor and thief Yuan Shikai’s restoration to become emperor, he set off a reverse tide of ‘restore the old, venerate Confucius’”.⁹⁷ Using the vulgar yet superstition-laced language characteristic of the Cultural Revolution,⁹⁸ these Red Guards found no value in engaging old culture and ideology in criticism; any acknowledgement of old culture was an attack on the revolution. Other Red Guard groups also used the example of Yuan Shikai to warn against the possibility of revisionists stealing the fruits of the Cultural Revolution.⁹⁹ Yet others attacked Sun Yat-sen’s widow, Song Qingling, for the bourgeois cultural influence on her lifestyle and desecrated the graves of her parents.¹⁰⁰ Due to Mao’s argument for the perpetual existence of class contradictions and his denial that socialist societies could solve contradictions non-antagonistically, Red Guards and radical historians argued that old culture could only ever serve the interests of the old ruling classes. To defeat the ideology of the bourgeoisie, the Red Guards violently sought to destroy all traces of bourgeois culture and historical narratives. This

holders such as Lin Biao; Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 242-3.

⁹⁷ Beijing Shifan Daxue Mao Zedong sixiang hong wei bing Jinggangshan zhandou tuan 北京师范大学毛泽东思想红卫兵井冈山战斗团, “‘Kongzi taolun hui’ shi niugui sheshen xiang Dang jingong de hei hui ‘孔子讨论会’是牛鬼蛇神向党进攻的黑会 [The ‘Forum on Confucius’ Was a Black Meeting of the Cow-Demons and Snake-Spirits Attacking the Party]”, 10 January 1967, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

⁹⁸ See Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun, “Revolutionary Rudeness: The Language of Red Guards and Rebel Workers in China’s Cultural Revolution”, *Indiana East Asian Working Paper Series on Language and Politics in Modern China*, no. 2, July 1993, 1-18.

⁹⁹ Qinghua Daxue si yi si weida zhuanzhe zongdui 00 zhidui 清华大学四一四伟大转折纵队 00 支队, “Chongpao meng hong, cuanduo Wenhua Da Geming chengguo de Yuan Shikai shi de renwu — Tao Zhu 重炮猛轰, 篡夺文化大革命成果的袁世凯式的任务—陶铸 [Heavily Bombard Tao Zhu — a Yuan Shikai-type Person who Wrested the Fruit of the Cultural Revolution]”, 14 September 1967, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*; Qinghua Daxue si yi si weida zhuanzhe zongdui 00 zhidui, “Paoda cuanduo Wenhua Da Geming chengguo de Yuan Shikai — ping Tao Zhu zhi liu 1967 nian 6yue chongban de yi pian wenzhang 炮打篡夺文化大革命成果的袁世凯—评陶铸之流 1967 年 6 月重版的一篇文章 [Bombard the Yuan Shikai that was Plucking the Fruit of the Great Cultural Revolution: On an Article Reprinted in June 1967 by Tao Zhu and his Like]”, 17 September 1967, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

¹⁰⁰ Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 71.

difference in opinion between Guan Feng and the Red Guards may have been a reason for Guan's fall in the Cultural Revolution and serves as an example of how radicals used historical narratives during the Cultural Revolution to make personal attacks against individual historians and their patrons.

Mao's supporters argued that counterrevolutionary restoration was a real threat, and therefore radical historians targeted their colleagues as members of the traitorous bourgeoisie prepared to betray and reverse the revolution. The second lesson of the 1911 Revolution historians identified during the Cultural Revolution, was that counterrevolutionaries hid within the ranks of the revolutionaries. In identifying specific historians for persecution, radicals made the ideological perspective more blatantly personal by using Mao's narrative of perpetual class contradictions and the role of the 1911 Revolution in that narrative, to make personal and political attacks. These attacks grew naturally from the assumption in Mao's new narrative of perpetual contradictions, and indeed from the debates over restrictive class analysis prior to the Cultural Revolution, that class conflict permeated all life and therefore that all conflict, even the personal, was a part of class conflict. The attacks were, however, not grounded in facts or research and they often invented facts to attack predetermined targets.¹⁰¹ These attacks resembled some of the accusations against Rong Mengyuan and others during the Anti-Rightist Movement. An early responder to Mao's call to criticise Wu Han was Zhu Guangqian 朱光潜 (1897–1986)¹⁰², who was later deemed a rightist in the Cultural Revolution. Zhu asked whether any good officials, such as Hai Rui as portrayed by Wu Han, had ever actually existed. Zhu concluded that, "One does not need to refer to the ancient past [to

¹⁰¹ Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*, 239-44. Zhang and Tang argued that some historians and politicians distorted or totally made up facts in order to launch accusations at various targets during the Cultural Revolution, particularly Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi.

¹⁰² Zhu Guangqian was one of the first and most prominent academics of modern aesthetics in China. He spent many years abroad before returning to China in the 1930s to write the majority of his major works. He stayed in China after the foundation of the PRC and was a professor at Beijing University. Despite his attempts to apply Maoism to aesthetics during the Cultural Revolution, he was criticised and persecuted for being a rightist. Zhu was rehabilitated after 1976.

decide whether good officials ever existed], just think about the things we ourselves have experienced. I am nearly seventy years old, I have seen the end of the Qing dynasty, Yuan Shikai, the Beiyang military, and the times of Chiang Kai-shek's rule. Just thinking of the bureaucrats I have known, which one could be a 'good official'? I cannot find one!"¹⁰³ Zhu used this sweeping assessment of history to make political and personal attacks against those targeted by Mao and other radicals. Another sweeping attack on the intellectuals came from Lin Zengping 林增平 (1923-1992),¹⁰⁴ who used the suicide of Chen Tianhua to argue that intellectuals during the 1911 Revolution did not understand how to lead or incite the masses and thus abandoned hope for the revolution and committed suicide. Lin concluded that independent mass movements developed the revolution far more than the actions or words of any intellectuals.¹⁰⁵ Lin justified attacks on intellectuals in all spheres by following Mao's redefinition of periodisation to argue that only the masses ever contributed to the development of history. This argument clearly developed from the prior use of restrictive class analysis to claim that only the masses advanced history but made even broader claims based on inaccurate depictions of history. Another target of sweeping accusations was the educational system, home to many of the rightists being targeted by the Cultural Revolution. Chen Boda argued that:

Every class society (slave, feudal, capitalist) has an education system which fits its needs. Now our schools' educational system is essentially a capitalist educational system (one could basically say so). Starting from the end of the Manchu Qing, we have had primary schools, secondary schools and universities. After the 1911 Revolution the capitalist educational system continued developing and China was a

¹⁰³ Zhu Guanqian, "Beijing xueshujie bufen renshi zuotan 'qing guan' wenti 北京学术界部分人士座谈 '清官'问题 [Informal Discussion about the Issue of 'Honest and Upright Officials' among Some People in Academic Circles in Beijing]", 11 March 1966, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

¹⁰⁴ Lin Zengping was a professor of history at Hunan Normal University, becoming dean of the history school after the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁰⁵ Lin Zengping, *Xinhai Geming 辛亥革命 [The 1911 Revolution]* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 15-16.

semi-feudal semi-colonial country, which is further complicated by some imperialist and traitorous educational things: Yanjing, Tianjin and Furen Universities¹⁰⁶ were all established by Americans and they served the goals of American capitalism and their system and materials all came essentially from Europe.¹⁰⁷

Chen justified all struggle against educational institutions and educators in the Cultural Revolution through this sweeping statement on the inevitability of class contradictions. Class contradictions permeated all life: therefore, all fields of human endeavour were constantly undergoing class struggle. Chen's conclusion built on the assumption within the method of restrictive class analysis and Mao's narrative of perpetual revolution, that the narration of history was a battleground of class conflict and extended it to all pursuits. In doing so, radical historians used sweeping and often inaccurate accounts of history to target their colleagues and gang up on already persecuted individuals. This section shows that historiography no longer pursued research and accurate narration, and instead historians used it as a weapon against previously determined targets. Radicals argued that history taught them to fear counterrevolutionary restoration from their colleagues and led to the dearth of historical research throughout the Cultural Revolution.

V. Conclusion

Ironically, the radical historians who employed restrictive class analysis by applying the narratives of contemporary class conflict into the past, who rejected the use of historical narratives produced by non-proletarian sources, engaged in exactly what they accused former exploitative classes of doing: producing history which served the ruling class. During the

¹⁰⁶ Yanjing 燕京 and Furen 辅仁 Universities were both Christian universities in the Beijing area that were dissolved and merged into other Beijing universities in 1952. Tianjin University was founded as a joint venture between Chinese and American educators.

¹⁰⁷ Chen Boda, "Chen Boda jiejian Qinghua Daxue shi sheng jianghua jiyao 陈伯达接见清华大学师生讲话纪要 [Chen Boda's Speech at the Reception for the Teachers and Students of Qinghua University]", 26 June 1967, in Song, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*.

Cultural Revolution radical historians used historical narratives to attack the enemies targeted by Mao and the radical politicians arrayed around him, and forced historical narratives to serve the rulers of the state. According to Mao's redefinition of perpetual contradictions, a new class would arise to challenge the proletariat as history proceeded eternally forward according to the dialectical resolution of contradictions. If the revolution therefore continued forever, with new classes constantly emerging in contradiction with the old, then the proletarian standpoint these authors applied to the past would also become obsolete. Most of these historians did not have to wait long for this to happen. Many radical historians were criticised and persecuted over the course of the Cultural Revolution's many twists and turns as conservative politicians made comebacks or more radical lines emerged. Guan Feng and Qi Benyu were arrested and sent to prison in 1968, while Chen Boda fell from power in 1969 and was personally rebuked by Mao in 1970. Political conflicts were interpreted as class conflicts, so when a political group fell so did all its members and their historical narratives. After the many twists and turns of the Cultural Revolution, the only historians left were those who deliberately avoided producing history or involving themselves in politics.

As historians such as Wu Han attempted to defend the importance of source criticism and protect the collegial and academic nature of debate over historical narratives, radical historians decried historicism as a tactic of the bourgeoisie to corrupt the future generation of revolutionaries. The Cultural Revolution violently opened this rift in the historical studies world and targeted all historians who had previously advocated historicism. Rather than bring historians into the fold through education and rectification, as Mao had done in Yan'an, radicals targeted historians for persecution and exile. Mao had given up on the idea that thought reform or service to the revolution could remake the bourgeoisie or intelligentsia, and instead sought to resolve contradictions through antagonistic means. Many of the historians who did attempt to follow the alterations Mao made to his master narrative of history found themselves under attack during the Cultural Revolution as historical research and accuracy

became secondary to personal and political objectives.

The dearth of historical discourse during the Cultural Revolution demonstrates Mao and the radicals' failure to unify the Party under a single ideology and master narrative of history. Historical narratives on the 1911 Revolution rarely found their way into major newspapers; the CCP made no concerted effort in 1971 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution. The anniversary of the 1911 Revolution went completely unremarked upon in the 10 October edition of the *People's Daily*, which occurred just weeks after the still unannounced flight and death of Lin Biao.¹⁰⁸ Instead, the front page was taken up by news of a trade treaty between the PRC and Ethiopia.¹⁰⁹ The most important journal for historical studies throughout the early history of the PRC, *Historical Studies*, shut down entirely in early 1966 and only resumed publication after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Few new monographs were published throughout the years of the Cultural Revolution; instead, previously written works such as Wu Yuzhang's *The 1911 Revolution*, which as previously noted was criticised by Wu Han for containing all theory and no data, were reprinted repeatedly. Wu Yuzhang's 1974 edition of *The 1911 Revolution*, moreover, was unaltered from the 1961 edition aside from the addition of several quotations from Chairman Mao as a preface. The republication therefore marked an attempt to re-establish the master narrative as it existed before Mao began altering his interpretation of contradictions in 1962 and further intensification of the importance of contradictions in 1965.

Mao built his master narrative of history in Yan'an and spread it through enforced reading during the 1942 Rectification Movement and widespread publication of histories which used

¹⁰⁸ Yan and Gao, *Turbulent Decade*, 335. Lin attempted to flee the PRC, but his plane crashed in Mongolia. The reasons for his flight and crash remain mysterious, but severely impacted the course of the Cultural Revolution by undermining faith in Mao and the radicals leading the Cultural Revolution.

¹⁰⁹ "Wei Haier Sailaxi yi shi huangdi bixia fangwen zhongguo 为海尔塞拉西一世皇帝陛下访问中国 [His Majesty Life-long Emperor Haile Salassie's Visit to China]", *Renmin ribao*, 10 October 1971, 1; "Zhongguo he Aisaiebiya liang guo zhengfu jingji jishu hezuo xieding 中国和埃塞俄比亚两国政府经济技术合作协定 [The Political, Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement Between China and Ethiopia]", *Renmin ribao*, 10 October 1971, 2.

the narrative. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao did the exact opposite by persecuting historians—including some who attempted to follow Mao's alterations to the master narrative—rather than educating them, and limiting the publication and dispersal of the narrative of perpetual class contradictions during the Cultural Revolution. Mao's narrative of perpetual contradictions failed because of the method of transmission. Mao had not learned the lessons of his own past successes, and instead piloted the Cultural Revolution to an eventual failure.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the creation and evolution of Mao's narrative of the 1911 Revolution, between 1935 and 1976. The historiography of the 1911 Revolution demonstrates that Mao created a master narrative of history to justify his political and ideological leadership of the CCP and China. Mao attempted to alter his master narrative and Mao Zedong Thought to suit the changing focuses of his leadership, but after 1959, he encountered increasing resistance to his policies and, therefore, to changing his master narrative. Both Mao and other CCP leaders encouraged historians to write historical narratives that commented on contemporary political debates over policy, and hoped that the narratives produced would validate their policies. Historians, for their part, employed historical narratives to comment on contemporary politics and took advantage of policies encouraging historical debate to defend the independence of the historical profession. When confronted by resistance to his policies, Mao reverted to political means to purge his opponents, such as during the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement and the later Cultural Revolution. Mao altered his master narrative to validate his political victories over the historians and politicians who did not conform to his master narrative or opposed his policies. Mao had hoped to strengthen the CCP by first destroying it through his purges, but his attacks on the Party during the Cultural Revolution to enforce his master narrative, policies and personal power, accomplished only the destructive task.

This study of CCP historiography of the 1911 Revolution provides both an intellectual and political history of the period of Mao's dominance over the Party. As an intellectual history, this thesis has analysed the historiography of the 1911 Revolution to examine the evolution of its dominant historical narratives. I have attempted to understand the influences affecting these narratives, deconstruct their methodologies and analyse the contributions made by Chinese historians during this time. As a political history, this thesis contextualises the intellectual findings with the political events of the times. Historical narratives from Mao Zedong's portrayal of the Revolutionary Alliance as a United Front organisation, to Rong

Mengyuan's defence of the historical contributions of the bourgeoisie, all served the contemporary political goals of their creators.

This thesis has shown the important role that historical narratives played in the creation of Mao Zedong Thought, providing useful insight to the study of CCP historiography. This study thus provides a new lens through which to study Mao Zedong Thought, the techniques Mao used to support his leadership, policies and goals. Other authors have dealt with these issues through surveys of the historiography of CCP history, such as Wylie,¹ Zhang and Tang,² and Apter and Saich,³ but have focused on shorter time spans than this thesis. Mao and his associates rewrote much of Chinese history, including the history of the 1911 Revolution, to create and validate Mao Zedong Thought. Among Mao's earliest writings after becoming leader of the CCP was a call for CCP members to summarise and inherit Chinese history "From Confucius to Sun Yat-sen".⁴ As this thesis has shown, Mao narrated his policies and leadership into Chinese history, inclusive of Party history and beyond. Mao did this throughout his life and control of the CCP.

I have identified four major themes in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution: the United Front, class analysis, contradictions in the periodisation of history and the unique nature of Chinese society. Mao readjusted his interpretation of the four themes and rebalanced their relative importance to validate his new goals and policies as they emerged throughout his life. I conclude this thesis by summarising its contributions to the study of Mao Zedong Thought, remarking on the sources of resistance to Mao found in historiography and finally identifying avenues for future research.

One question in the literature on Mao Zedong Thought, which until now has not been

¹ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*.

² Zhang and Tang, *Zhonggongdang shixueshi*.

³ Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*.

⁴ Mao Zedong, "Zhongguo Gongchandang zai minzu zhanzheng zhong de diwei", 260-261.

answered, is what place the United Front occupied in Mao Zedong Thought. The success of the United Front, and of the discourse that the CCP used to promote it, played a critical role in the establishment of Mao's power over the CCP and in delegitimising Chiang Kai-shek during the Civil War. This link between Mao Zedong Thought and the United Front was not as apparent in historical narratives of the history of the CCP, as it was in historical narratives on the 1911 Revolution. By focusing on the historical discourse surrounding an event outside the history of the CCP, I have shed light on the relationship between the United Front, the discourse that praised it and Mao's ascent.

The prominence of the United Front in Mao Zedong Thought and his works reflected Mao's thinking on which forces in society could bear proletarian consciousness and contribute to the socialist revolution. Meisner and Schram both argue that Mao believed in the importance of willpower in deciding the fate of the revolution.⁵ In Yan'an, Mao believed in the ability of individuals to remake themselves and the United Front played a key role in Mao's policies and works. By the Cultural Revolution, Mao predicted endless political and ideological struggle between classes that left no potential for a United Front. He believed in the need for conscious participation in the revolution, but over the course of his life grew increasingly sceptical of the ability of most classes to make such a conscious choice.

The disappearance of the United Front from Mao and his supporters' historical narratives, after 1957, suggests that Mao viewed the United Front not only as a practical tool to win the Japanese and Civil War before 1949, but also as a tool to remake the bourgeoisie. It has become apparent that Mao attempted to apply the Yan'an model of the rectification of Party members to intellectuals to the PRC.⁶ Prior to 1949, Mao offered to share governance of China with those willing to join the United Front first against Japan, and then against the Nationalist

⁵ Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 42; Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, 54-56.

⁶ Ji, *Linguistic Engineering*, 51; Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, 303; Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 48-51.

Party. Mao enticed groups into the United Front because he believed that Mao Zedong Thought and a shared commitment to the War against Japan could remake the national bourgeoisie to support the socialist revolution.

After 1949, however, Mao's interpretation of the United Front as a tool for reinventing the bourgeoisie clashed with the views of those within the United Front department who had believed the United Front involved sharing governance of the PRC. Historians defended the United Front by arguing for a continuing role for the national bourgeoisie in the PRC. After 1957, Mao and his associates reiterated that a non-antagonistic contradiction existed between the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the PRC and that only service to the proletariat could remake the bourgeoisie. By the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Mao's fear of revisionism and his loss of power after the Great Leap Forward had convinced Mao that the bourgeoisie could not remake itself and would always uphold reactionary views. As Mao's pessimism on the ability of the bourgeoisie to remake itself grew, the United Front faded from Mao Zedong Thought. The United Front was thus completely removed from the most popular versions of Mao's works, despite the pervasiveness of the cult of Mao and Mao Zedong Thought during the Cultural Revolution. The booklet *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* contained only one reference to the United Front—a quotation from one of Mao's 1960s speeches calling on all African, Asian and Latin countries to "Form the broadest united front to oppose the U.S. imperialist policies".⁷ Mao had so thoroughly repudiated his prior belief in the ability of the bourgeoisie to remake itself that he and his supporters removed all references to a domestic United Front from canonical Mao Zedong Thought.

⁷ Mao Zedong, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung*, ed. and trans. Peking Foreign Language Press (Hong Kong: Foreign Language Press, 1972). The quoted section appears on page 178. Two quotations from "On New Democracy" occur on pages 23-24 and 299-300: the quotations concern the impending demise of the capitalist system and the role of revolutionary culture in promoting the revolution, respectively. Two further quotations from Mao's 1944 work "The United Front in Cultural Work" appear on pages 124-125 and 303: the first is on the necessity of the mass line, and the second is on the necessity of cultural education in the army.

The evolution of class analysis in Mao Zedong Thought also illuminates Mao's beliefs on the ability of the bourgeoisie to remake itself and participate in the socialist revolution. Mao defined class according propensity to support the CCP, but also believed that ideological education could overcome class constraints.⁸ The changes made in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution show how Mao re-evaluated the propensity of different groups to support his leadership of the CCP and the revolution.

Mao clearly believed in the ability of the bourgeoisie to remake itself during the 1942 Yan'an Rectification Movement, but by the start of the Civil War in 1945, Mao argued that the big bourgeoisie could not be remade in order to attack Chiang Kai-shek. The contrasting depictions of Sun Yat-sen as representing the reformable national bourgeoisie and Chiang Kai-shek as representing the unreformable comprador bourgeoisie, highlight the contradiction within Mao Zedong Thought over the question of the bourgeoisie's ability to remake itself. The rise of restrictive class analysis following Mao's categorisation of class according to participation in the socialist revolution in 1957,⁹ and his reminder of the importance of class struggle in 1962,¹⁰ did not represent a change in his understanding of class analysis, but rather a restriction of the classes he deemed able to support the socialist revolution. The denial by Mao and radical historians of the historical contributions made by the bourgeoisie reflected Mao's increasing scepticism about this class. By the time of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Mao no longer believed that any part of the bourgeoisie could be remade and instead encouraged the antagonistic and violent resolution of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

The debate over the class analysis of historical figures, such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, is particularly indicative of Mao's growing distrust of the bourgeoisie. During the Civil

⁸ Wylie, *The Emergence of Maoism*, 43; Selden, *China in Revolution*, 157.

⁹ Mao Zedong, "Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti", 1.

¹⁰ MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, v. 3, 275-281.

War, from 1945 to 1949, Mao and the other CCP historians argued that Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek represented two different paths for the bourgeoisie. Sun stood for revolutionary ideological reform through unity with the masses, while Chiang stood for a reactionary alliance with imperialism and feudal remnants in China. After 1949, historians debated how to relate other historical figures from the 1911 Revolution to these two paths. Historians developed restrictive class analysis as a response to the 1957 Anti-Rightist Movement, and argued that bourgeois historical figures had not contributed to the revolution, even Sun Yat-sen. Rather than remake the bourgeoisie, Mao, along with radical politicians and historians, began to believe the opposite: bourgeois culture and ideology could infect and remake the revolutionary classes into reactionaries. To Mao, revisionism meant not just the emergence of hidden bourgeois elements, but also the ideological subversion of the revolution by a new bourgeois cohort of experts who served their own interests rather than those of the masses.¹¹ The shift in the evaluation of historical figures over the course of the PRC—from venerating Sun Yat-sen as a model of revolutionary innovation to denying all the accomplishments of any bourgeois historical figure based on only a cursory analysis of their class background—shows the change in Mao's thought. In 1942, he believed that socialist ideology could be taught; by 1966, Mao believed that protecting socialist ideology against the infection of bourgeois ideology was a constant struggle.

The historiography of the 1911 Revolution also provides a unique lens from which to view Mao's theory of contradictions. I have argued throughout this thesis that Chinese historians used Mao's theory of contradictions to periodise history. Mao's master narrative of history depended on the use of contradictions to periodise history since the beginnings of the narrative. The intense debate among historians over periodisation between 1949 and 1961,

¹¹ Lucien W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics: a Psychocultural Study of the Authority Crisis in Political Development* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1968), 46-47; Harding, *Organizing China*, 235; Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, 93-4, 127.

moreover, demonstrates the centrality of contradictions to Mao Zedong Thought.

After 1949, historians argued that the fundamental contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation had not ended in 1949 and, therefore, that the national bourgeoisie still had a role in the PRC. In 1957, however, Mao went against the consensus within the Party, that the PRC was defined by the contradiction between the advanced relations of production and backwards means of production, to argue that the non-antagonistic contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie defined the socialist era in the PRC. Later political developments in the Soviet Union and China—such as the criticism of the Hundred Flowers, Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation and the failure of the Great Leap Forward—led Mao to view the contradiction as antagonistic. Other CCP leaders disagreed with Mao's interpretation, which led to a split in the Party during the Cultural Revolution. So long as Mao identified contradictions between the Party and external forces, his master narrative and theory of contradictions helped ideologically unify the CCP against its enemies. Mao's identification of the bourgeoisie as the enemy, however, met with resistance and he turned to political means to purge his opponents and enforce his interpretation of contradictions. Mao's belief in the absoluteness of contradictions helped lead to his attacks on the Party and the eventual discrediting of his leadership, policies and master narrative, after the Cultural Revolution.

The historiography of the 1911 Revolution shows that absolute contradictions between forces in society were a critical component of Mao Zedong Thought that changed little throughout the course of Mao's leadership over the CCP. What did change were the targets of contradictions and the methods Mao used to resolve contradictions. The changes in how Mao viewed the resolution of contradictions reflected the political battles Mao engaged in and the policies he attempted to justify. The historiography of the 1911 Revolution followed Mao's lead, as historians read Mao's changing view on the resolution of contradictions into the past. The portrayal of the Revolutionary Alliance as an example of the United Front justified Mao's

leadership and master narrative, before 1949. The disappearance of such portrayals, after 1957, confirms that Mao used the United Front as a tool to attain his real goal of amassing forces against a mutual enemy and, thereby, remake the classes involved. The United Front disappeared from historical narratives after 1957, but the goal of remaking the national bourgeoisie through mutual commitment remained the same. By 1966, however, historians used narratives of the 1911 Revolution in debates over the antagonistic resolution of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Historians argued that all history and culture was an ideological battleground where proletarian and bourgeois ideologies struggled for the allegiance of the people. The narration of history, like all aspects of life, became part of the resolution of contradictions.

The portrayals of Chinese society as unique in the historiography of the 1911 Revolution were an attempt to justify Mao's power. Mao used narratives of Chinese uniqueness to establish his power; conversely, when historical narratives argued against China's uniqueness, Mao's power was already secure and needed no further reinforcement. Between 1935 and 1942, Mao justified his leadership of the CCP by arguing for the unique nature of China's revolution and for the need to adapt Marxism to Chinese conditions. His power and influence grew in part due to his historical narratives of Chinese uniqueness. Once Mao secured power, such narratives could disappear to instead support the implementation of Soviet-modelled economic policies in the PRC. Historiography emulated Soviet historiography and historical narratives portrayed the Chinese revolution as similar to other revolutions, in order to endorse the Soviet economic policies. After 1957, however, Mao and his adherents lost faith in the Soviet model and once again portrayed the Chinese revolution as unique to validate Mao's search for China's unique path towards socialism. The reintroduction of narratives of Chinese uniqueness, moreover, served to re-establish Mao's power after the failure of the Great Leap Forward. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were both expressions of Mao's search for China's unique path to socialism. In the final analysis, however, each was among

Mao's greatest failures and contributed to his loss of authority.

In addition to expounding on the sources of Mao Zedong's authority and the evolution of Mao Zedong Thought, this study of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution reveals the sources and types of resistance to Mao. By studying the historiography of the 1911 Revolution, rather than Party history or the works of specific historians, I have provided a unique lens to identify how and why historians resisted Mao's policies and master narrative.

Historians used Mao Zedong Thought and Mao's master narrative against itself rather than argue directly against it. After the 1942 Rectification Movement, no CCP historians argued against Mao's master narrative or policies outright. Some, like Wu Han, used satire to criticise Mao, but even Wu Han joined the other historians in the PRC by accepting many of the founding themes of Mao's master narrative.

After the Great Leap Forward, historicism emerged to oppose restrictive class analysis and the antagonistic interpretation of contradictions it entailed. Wu Han—who assumed that his political position protected him—argued against those historians using restrictive class analysis to portray modern Chinese history as the story of the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Wu argued that the correct interpretation of historical facts could help guide the revolution, just as Mao claimed he had done prior to 1949 by adapting Marxism to Chinese conditions. Wu Han's satirical use of Hai Rui to criticise Mao's dismissal of Peng Dehuai was only one aspect of the wider political and historiographical opposition to Mao's leadership, policies and ideology, albeit a prominent aspect. Wu's stance put him on the same side as Liu Shaoqi and others in the CCP leadership that Mao identified as threats to his power.

Despite resistance to his ideas and the changes within the narrative itself, Mao's master narrative dominated the narration of history for nearly forty years. Historiography has changed significantly since Mao's death, and new narratives which portray the 1911

Revolution as a significant step in the modernisation and globalisation of China have emerged since the 1980s.¹² Nationalist narratives of history have also risen to prominence particularly since the 1990s.¹³ Mao's master narrative, however, survives and remains influential even after his death. In fact, many historians have rebuked attempts by contemporary CCP leadership to change the master narrative to show a history of Chinese modernisation. This has led some historians to adopt Mao's master narrative as an alternative to the narrative of modernisation.¹⁴ The historiography of the 1911 Revolution continues to be a valuable case study of post-Mao historiography because of the rise of nationalist narratives of history since the 1990s. Further study of the historiography of the 1911 Revolution after Mao in order to determine the legacy of his master narrative and its continuing influence on contemporary historiography and politics, may help us understand the relationship between pre- and post-Mao China. A study of how post-Mao Chinese historians have reckoned with the enduring influence of Mao's master narrative of history can show how Chinese society writ large has reckoned with the enduring influence of Mao Zedong, his thought and policies.

The victors write history and Mao Zedong was no exception. Mao established his political control over the CCP in 1935 and thereafter spread his master narrative of history to justify his power in the 1942 Rectification Movement. Mao wrote the history of his victory. He did not remain idle, however, and sought new victories and greater power. Mao altered his historical narratives to reflect his new targets before achieving victory in those struggles. When he was victorious, so too was his ever-changing master narrative, and Mao emerged victorious in most of the political battles during his life.

¹² Daniel F. Vukovich, *China and Orientalism: Western Knowledge Production and the P.R.C.* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2; Cui Zhihai, "Xin Zhongguo chengli yilai de Xinhai Geming shi yanjiu", 152.

¹³ Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 49-51, 187-191.

¹⁴ Gao Rui, "Eclipse and Memory", 307.

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